AFRICA -CED

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Co-edited by: Yagmur Ceylan-Korkut, Giuliano Luongo

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With immense gratitude, we honour our speakers, whose wisdom, generosity, and unwavering endurance carried this vision into being.

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Disclaimer

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I. FOREWORD

A World in Motion Needs Minds in Motion

This book is not a record; it is a pulse. It echoes a number of sessions where ideas collided, where diplomats argued with economists, where technicians challenged philosophers, and where Africa, Europe, and the world met thanks to the innovative and stimulating initiative of Professor Anis Bajrektarević and his team.

Born from a series of conferences that refused complacency, these pages carry the urgency of our time with practical yet substantive discussions. They speak from a world no longer artificially divided into North and South, East and West, or developed and developing. Here, theory walks beside practice, geopolitics meets data, and diplomacy learns to speak the language of algorithms, infrastructure, trade routes, and human capital.

From economic diplomacy to artificial intelligence, from Africa's rise to the redefinition of multilateralism, from development finance to digital sovereignty—this book maps the tectonic shifts reshaping the 21st-century order. It speaks from a world that is interconnected, accelerating, fragile, and ambitious—and very much a work in progress.

What unites these interventions is not ideology. It is freedom—which we have to increasingly value—and conviction:

- A conviction that Africa is not the future—it is the present.
- A conviction that cooperation is not optional—it is existential.
- A conviction that technology without wisdom is power without direction.
- And a conviction that diplomacy must evolve or become irrelevant.

These contributions do not offer comfort. They offer clarity. They do not simplify complexity; they navigate it. They do not predict the future; they build it. This volume is therefore a bridge between continents, generations, governance and innovation, and power and purpose.

If there is a single message running through these pages that I would like to be a takeaway, it is this: "*The world is safer when we cooperate. The future is stronger when we build it together.*" These words, obvious some time ago, now resonate more than ever.

Roland Kobia
Ambassador of the European Union

INTRODUCTION

Economic diplomacy became one of the defining tools of power, partnership, and progress in the 21st century. Trade, investment, infrastructure, financial systems, and technology governance shaped international relations as profoundly as traditional political dialogue. States no longer competed or cooperated only through ideology or security alliances but through supply chains, digital ecosystems, development finance, and market access. In that evolving global order, the ability to understand and practice economic diplomacy was not an advantage—it was a necessity. The Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) Program was created in response to this reality.

At the heart of the program lay a clear recognition: Africa's role in global economic diplomacy was not emerging—it was re-emerging.

Once, Africa stood at the forefront of historic global transformation. The continent was the moral and political engine of the 20th century's anticolonial movements, reshaping international law, sovereignty norms, and the very structure of the United Nations system. Simply put, it was a source of hope

for the Global South and the origin of a non-bloc "third way" in culture, politics, economy, and intergenerational dialogue. Notably, Africa represented a vision for the future. Newly independent African states, inspired by the visionary Bandung Process of 1955 and further supported and accelerated by the Non-Aligned Movement (within the UN, seen through the Group of 77), were not passive actors; they were architects of a new global consciousness around self-determination, cross-generational and interracial dialogue, understanding and collaboration, equality among nations, and development as a universal right. Africa was a champion of political progress, socio-economic vitality, intellectual appeal, and a decisive voice in redefining the global order.

Yet in the decades that followed, global narratives shifted. The collapse of the bipolar politico-military and ideological confrontation, economic crises, debt burdens, conflicts, and structural adjustment policies recast the continent in the international imagination as a region of risk rather than potential. For nearly two decades, Africa was too often described—inaccurately and unfairly—as the "forgotten continent," viewed through the narrow lenses of aid dependency and instability instead of agency and innovation. During that period, global economic diplomacy frequently treated Africa as an object of policy rather than a subject shaping it.

That era ended.

Africa now stands at the intersection of the most important structural shifts of our time. It is the world's youngest continent, with a rapidly expanding workforce. It is urbanizing at an unprecedented speed. Furthermore, the continent has be-

come a frontier of digital finance innovation, renewable energy potential, and regional economic integration. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents one of the most ambitious trade integration projects of the modern era. At the same time, Africa has become a central arena of global strategic engagement—not as a passive recipient, but as a negotiating partner in infrastructure, technology, energy, and industrial development.

This transformation demanded a new generation of professionals who could navigate Africa's place in global economic diplomacy with confidence, knowledge, and strategic awareness. Therefore, the IEF president and I charted a vision, inviting a consortium of international partners to execute it. The Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) Program was designed precisely for that purpose. It equipped participants with the tools to understand how economic interests, political priorities, and development objectives intersected—and how African actors could shape, rather than merely adapt to, these dynamics.

For the CED program participants (mainly African nationals and African specialists), the program served as an instrument of empowerment. Jointly developed by the Ghana-based Institute for Economy and Finance (IEF), the International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies (IFIMES) holding Special Consultative Status with the UN, the scientific magazine *European Perspectives*, and the comprehensive cultural platform *Culture for Peace*—along with associated partners and media platforms across different continents—it offered a platform to engage global systems from a position of expertise, to negotiate partnerships that reflected national and re-

gional priorities, and to connect Africa's demographic, entrepreneurial, and resource strengths with global opportunities.

For non-African participants, it provided a deeper, more realistic understanding of Africa's economic, political, and institutional complexity—moving beyond outdated stereotypes toward informed and mutually beneficial engagement. Beyond the exceptional access to profoundly knowledgeable speakers and top world leaders (from African academia and practitioners well-versed in local peculiarities and dynamics to the world's most influential economists, such as Jeffrey Sachs, and heads of leading international organizations), the program also crafted a vibrant professional network and a lasting alumni platform. This network enables continued collaboration, strategic exchange, and mutual support for all participants for years beyond the program's completion.

The CED program brought together around 100 participants from approximately 30 countries across all continents, with nearly 60% admitted on a fully funded basis (especially those from least developed, landlocked, and small island countries). It was further enriched by 23 distinguished speakers from dozens of countries across four continents, ensuring both global reach and diversity of perspective.

The program also situated Africa within broader global transitions. Participants examined how globalization was being redefined through geoeconomics, digital sovereignty, supply chain resilience, and sustainable development finance. They explored how sovereignty was evolving in an interconnected world, how foreign direct investment shaped national strat-

egy, and how international economic standard-setting bodies influenced domestic policy space. In this context, Africa was not a case study at the margins, but a lens through which many of the world's future economic and diplomatic trends could be understood.

By combining academic insight, practitioner experience, and interactive learning, the Certified Economic Diplomat Program reflected the reality that economic diplomacy was no longer the domain of foreign ministries alone. It belonged equally to development institutions, regional organizations, businesses, and knowledge networks. Its practice required historical awareness, political sensitivity, economic literacy, and strategic foresight.

Ultimately, the CED program was about restoring balance to the global conversation—recognizing Africa not as a peripheral concern, nor as a temporary "emerging story," but as a structural pillar of the 21st-century international system. In a world where economic relationships shaped political futures, understanding Africa's trajectory was indispensable. Preparing professionals to operate effectively in that space was not only timely—it was essential.

Echoing the spirit of Ambassador Roland Kobia's reflections on cooperation as the bedrock of a safer and stronger world, the archive reminds us that our African journey is far from over; it continues renewed, re-energized, and more confidently steered through the endeavors of the Global Academy for Future Governance (GAFG), where the Certified Economic Diplomat Program has given rhythm to dialogue, color to

partnership, and orientation to shared purpose—transforming exchange into momentum and vision into direction, as the voyage carries on and we sail forward together.

Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarević

CED Program Originator and Co-Director
Author of the Africa book: "Europe and Africa: Similarities and Differences in Security Structures" (2018)

Geneva, February 2026

Words from Notables

Speaking live at the launch of the Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) Program

Distinguished guests, academics and diplomats, ladies and gentlemen,

Good day to you all from Istanbul, Türkiye. Let me begin by introducing myself—I am Ambassador Isiaka Imam, Secretary General of the Developing 8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, known as the D-8. God bless the distinguished participants at the opening session of the Certified Economic Diplomat programme, organized by the Institute of Economics and Finance (IEF) in collaboration with the National History for Military Struggles. I want to thank the organizers for inviting me to speak at this opening.

I commend the efforts in making this training accessible to diplomats worldwide, including those from the D-8 member states. We feel this training in economic diplomacy is indeed apt, given the fact that we live in an increasingly globalized world—where international trade, investment promotion, protection, and collaboration on bilateral and multilateral agreements have become effective tools for promoting a nation's foreign policy objectives.

Furthermore, in today's world, economic diplomacy provides diplomats and experts with tools to anticipate future uncer-

tainties, such as those occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent geopolitical crises which have led to disruptions in global supply chains. Therefore, I expect this program to provide the attending diplomats and experts with the strategic thinking and foresight required to anticipate future uncertainties.

Distinguished participants, let me use this opportunity to briefly introduce the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. The D-8 is an intergovernmental organization, established in Istanbul by the governments of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Türkiye.

The primary objective of our organization is to promote trade and economic cooperation among the member states in the areas of agriculture and food security, energy, industry and SMEs, transportation, and trade. Recently, we have also included health and social protection, education and human resource development, ICT, and youth economic parity in our economic cooperation agenda.

In the last seven years, we have witnessed multiple achievements in the D-8 organization. Today, our cooperation impacts 1.38 billion people; our total GDP has quadrupled from $1.5 trillion to almost $5 trillion. Our external trade was $2.6 trillion in 2023, up from $2 trillion in 2021. The D-8's internal trade also rose from $14 billion in 1997 to $150 billion in 2021. Efforts are being made to grow our internal trade to $500 billion by 2030. These macro indicators show the great potential of the D-8 and its future as an economic powerhouse.

With great pleasure, I am happy to inform all the organizations that the D-8 has been actively engaged in the last few years with external partners, both regional and continental, including those within the United Nations, on how we can collaborate to give top priority to trainees.

This training is a result of collaboration between the D-8 and IFIMES to promote capacity building and professional development. Distinguished participants, undoubtedly, economic diplomacy training aligns with our priority to promote education and human resource development in the D-8. Therefore, through this program, participants will gain insights into the best practices in economic diplomacy to enable them to effectively represent their country's economic interests on a global stage.

The inclusion of esteemed speakers such as Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs and Dr. Lassina Zerbo in this training shows the high calibre of resourceful persons for this program. Therefore, as your partner in collaboration, I encourage all participants to engage with the content and share the experiences of this program.

To conclude, distinguished participants, I am confident that this initiative will be a great success and will pave the way for more collaborative development endeavours in the future. I thank you all for your attention and wish you productive and enlightening experiences. Thank you.

Amb. Isiaka Imam
Secretary General of D-8

Africa stands at the beginning of a potential 40-year growth transformation comparable to the trajectories of China since 1980 and India since 2000. With a population of roughly 1.4 billion, the continent has the demographic scale to achieve rapid development, but structural barriers—especially the legacy of colonial fragmentation into 55 states—limit competitiveness and global economic influence.

To overcome this, Africa should pursue deeper regional integration through a stronger and more ambitious African Union, advancing toward a unified political, economic, financial, and eventually monetary union. A single market, interconnected trans-boundary infrastructure (energy, digital networks, transport), and coordinated policy frameworks would create the scale necessary for sustained growth and global relevance.

Sustained development requires large-scale investment across all forms of capital, with human capital as the top priority. Universal quality education, rapid electrification, and full digital access for households are essential foundations for productivity and innovation. At the same time, Africa needs access to long-term, low-interest international financing comparable to advanced economies; current credit rating methodologies undervalue Africa's growth potential and constrain its development.

Africa's growing diplomatic presence—strengthened by the AU's role in global forums—should be leveraged to expand its voice in global economic governance. To this end, what is needed is a cooperative, multipolar world order in which re-

gional blocs, including groups such as BRICS, engage in constructive dialogue rather than hegemonic competition.

Ultimately, Africa's path to rapid and sustained growth lies in integration, strategic investment in human and physical infrastructure, fair global financing conditions, and strengthened multilateral cooperation.

Jeffrey D. Sachs
Professor, Columbia University

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This was a certified, non-degree, 24-teaching-hour integrated program, split into 8 consecutive weeks, with each session lasting three hours. The workload is equivalent to 3 to 4 ECTS credits when preparatory work and homework are included.

The program featured 23 speakers representing 15 nationalities across 4 continents. This cohort included 8 academics (one for each session) as well as practitioners, all holding a minimum of a master's degree, with several holding the highest university professorial ranks. Each of the 23 speakers possesses three or more decades of relevant professional experience.

The speakers' backgrounds spanned:

- Serving and former Secretaries-General of leading multilateral and regional organizations
- A senior Ambassador of the European Union and a former Defence Secretary of the United Kingdom
- Senior officials from the United Nations system and its specialized agencies in Vienna and Washington, D.C.
- The Director of the OPEC Fund for International Development

- The President of a global political association and a former minister holding the highest environmental government portfolio

- The Founder and Executive Director of an international diplomacy and policy institution in Geneva

- A Chief Executive Officer of an international health sciences chamber

- A world-renowned university professor and economist from Columbia University, alongside leading finance experts and bankers from Africa

Participants were professionals representing 32 nationalities from all continents. Among them were individuals from top institutional echelons in politics, the economy, the judiciary, and security, alongside numerous high-ranking diplomats, government officials, and leading executives from the finance and insurance industries.

The program also offered additional specialized sessions, known as *privatissima*. These consisted of an extra *tour-de-table*, organized upon demand, conducted under the Chatham House Rule. These sessions allowed small groups of participants with specific interests to engage deeply with requested speakers.

In addition to the video and audio protocols recorded for each session, a special report or article was drafted by a participant volunteer and published after every session in the global press across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This feature,

along with those mentioned above, is unique; no other program globally offers this level of engagement, providing exceptional exposure and promotion for its participants.

The entire program was developed and executed by the GAFG founding consortium of partners, which expanded to include several additional entities. It was run in cooperation with its African regional partner, the Institute of Economics & Finance, alongside the scientific magazine *European Perspectives* and the comprehensive media platform *Modern Diplomacy*. Key support was also provided by IFIMES (the international institute holding Special Consultative Status with the UN) and its broader consortium of international partners, including the D-8, *Diplomat Magazine*, Life Learning Academy, The Habibie Center, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, the Washington-based *International Affairs Magazine*, the Energoinvest corporation, and numerous others.

II. PROGRAM ROUNDS

1. Diplomacy Boost

Abstract

In the contemporary international system, diplomacy has experienced a profound and structural transformation, progressively extending beyond its traditional political, representational, and ceremonial functions to incorporate economic strategy, investment promotion, and development-oriented engagement. The intensification of globalization, the growing competition for foreign direct investment (FDI), and the accelerated diffusion of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) have fundamentally reshaped the modalities through which states pursue economic interests abroad. Economic diplomacy has thus emerged as a central pillar of foreign policy, particularly for regions such as Africa, where economic transformation, technological change, and international partnerships are increasingly interconnected (Bayne & Woolcock, 2017, pp. 1–15).

Africa is increasingly positioned at the intersection of global investment strategies, digital transformation processes, and data-driven development trajectories. International institutions emphasize that digitalization and AI-enabled technologies are reshaping production systems, trade facilitation mechanisms, logistics networks, financial services, and public

administration across the continent. These transformations generate new opportunities for productivity growth, regional integration, and institutional efficiency. At the same time, they introduce governance, regulatory, and capacity-building challenges that require coordinated diplomatic engagement at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels (UNCTAD, 2021; World Bank, 2023).

Within this evolving global and technological landscape, the Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) Program emerged as a structured and practice-oriented response to the growing demand for advanced competencies in economic diplomacy. Designed as an eight-week online training program integrating theory and practice through quarterly cycles, the initiative targeted current and aspiring diplomats, policymakers, and professionals whose home, career, or strategic interests lie in Africa. The program directly addressed a persistent gap between traditional diplomatic education and the increasingly complex economic responsibilities embedded in contemporary diplomatic roles, particularly in relation to investment attraction, international economic negotiations, and development finance (Okano-Heijmans, 2011).

The program was developed and delivered under the leadership of Accra Business School and the Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in Ghana, alongside its consortium of European partners led by Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024).

By focusing on economic diplomacy, globalization, state sovereignty in international economic relations, and competition

for foreign direct investment, the Certified Economic Diplomat Program equipped participants with analytical and operational skills relevant to an era increasingly shaped by digitalization and artificial intelligence. Ultimately, the program contributed to the formation of economic diplomats capable of strengthening national resilience, fostering sustainable growth, and positioning Africa as a strategic actor within global economic and technological diplomacy.

1. The Transformation of Diplomacy in the Global Economy

In today's evolving global landscape, the role of diplomats extends far beyond traditional statecraft. Contemporary diplomacy increasingly integrates economic considerations, reflecting the growing importance of trade, investment, and financial flows in shaping international relations. As Bayne and Woolcock (2017, pp. 1–15) argue, economic objectives have progressively moved from the margins to the core of diplomatic agendas, transforming diplomacy into a strategic instrument for economic representation, negotiation, and influence.

Diplomatic missions are now frequently expected to function as platforms for promoting national economic interests abroad. This includes:

- Facilitating dialogue between public and private actors
- Supporting national enterprises in foreign markets

- Engaging with investors and development partners

As a result, diplomats are increasingly required to operate as intermediaries between governments, markets, and international institutions, navigating complex economic environments while maintaining political sensitivity.

This transformation is further reinforced by technological change. Digitalization and artificial intelligence are reshaping global value chains, altering patterns of competitiveness, production, and investment allocation. Economic diplomacy increasingly involves engagement with technology-oriented investors, digital infrastructure initiatives, and international regulatory discussions related to data governance and emerging technologies. Consequently, diplomacy now operates at the intersection of politics, economics, and technological transformation, requiring a broader and more sophisticated skill set than in the past.

2. Africa in the Context of Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence

Africa's economic trajectory is increasingly shaped by digital transformation and the diffusion of AI-enabled technologies. According to the World Bank (2023), digitalization has the potential to support economic diversification, enhance financial inclusion, and improve the efficiency of public service delivery across the continent. AI-related applications are progressively integrated into logistics systems, customs administration, financial services, and public governance, contributing to productivity gains and institutional modernization.

These developments position Africa not merely as a passive recipient of global technological change but as an active space for experimentation and adaptation. At the same time, they generate complex policy challenges related to regulatory capacity, institutional readiness, and skills development. Addressing these challenges requires sustained engagement with international partners, development institutions, and foreign investors.

From a diplomatic perspective, these dynamics expand the scope of economic diplomacy. Diplomatic actors are increasingly expected to engage with technology-driven investment strategies and digital transformation agendas, even when these themes are not explicitly framed as technological diplomacy. This expanded role often contrasts with the traditional training of diplomats, which has historically emphasized political negotiation and legal frameworks over economic and technological competencies (Okano-Heijmans, 2011, pp. 9–12).

3. Addressing the Diplomatic Skills Gap: From Theory to Practice

Recognizing these structural shifts, a visionary team launched the Certified Economic Diplomat Program as an eight-week online training initiative structured around quarterly cycles of theory and practice. The program responded directly to the widening gap between academic preparation and the operational realities faced by diplomats in contemporary international environments.

Many diplomats enter service with limited formal exposure to economics, finance, or investment promotion. This skills gap can significantly constrain the effectiveness of diplomatic missions, particularly in contexts characterized by intense competition for foreign direct investment and development finance (UNCTAD, 2023). The program was therefore designed to strengthen participants' analytical capacity and practical understanding of economic diplomacy, enabling them to operate more effectively in complex international settings.

By integrating theoretical frameworks with applied perspectives, the program sought to enhance participants' ability to interpret global economic trends, engage with investors, and contribute to national development strategies through diplomatic channels.

4. Leadership, Experience, and Institutional Credibility

The program was developed and delivered under the leadership of Accra Business School and the Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in Ghana, alongside its consortium of European partners led by Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic. The core team brought over two decades of experience across academia, consultancy, and financial services in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Their professional portfolio included economic diplomacy initiatives, development financing projects, and loan portfolios involving institutions such as the African Development Bank.

The African Development Bank underscores the importance of institutional capacity, policy coordination, and interna-

tional engagement in fostering sustainable development across Africa. These principles underpinned the program's institutional orientation and reinforced its credibility within the broader ecosystem of economic diplomacy and development finance (African Development Bank Group, n.d.).

5. Economic Diplomacy, AI, and Africa's Position in Global Investment Flows

Economic diplomacy increasingly intersects with technological transformation and AI-driven investment strategies. UNCTAD (2021) highlights that emerging technologies are reshaping global investment patterns and production systems, with significant implications for developing regions. For African economies, attracting technology-oriented foreign direct investment requires not only favorable economic conditions but also credible diplomatic engagement and institutional reliability.

The Certified Economic Diplomat Program was designed to prepare participants to operate within this environment by strengthening their understanding of economic diplomacy in a technologically evolving global economy. By framing Africa as a strategic economic space, the program aligned with international efforts to integrate the continent more fully into global trade and investment systems (World Trade Organization, 2022).

6. Curriculum Orientation and Strategic Relevance

The eight-week curriculum focused on economic diplomacy, globalization, state sovereignty in international economic re-

lations, and competition for foreign direct investment. These themes were particularly relevant in an era where digitalization and artificial intelligence influence competitiveness, investment decisions, and policy coordination.

Interactive learning exercises led by experienced academics and diplomats reinforced analytical thinking and practical problem-solving. This experiential approach supported the development of competencies required to navigate complex international economic environments and evolving diplomatic challenges (Kolb, 2015).

7. Conclusion

In an interconnected and increasingly technology-driven global economy, economic diplomats play a central role in shaping national development trajectories. The Certified Economic Diplomat Program addressed critical training gaps and established a benchmark for professional education in economic diplomacy. Beyond its educational objectives, the program served as a structured gateway to Africa, fostering informed and sustained engagement with the continent's economic transformation in an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and digitalization.

Dayana da Silva

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2. Africa Between Globalization and Slowbalisation

Jeffrey Sachs is known for many accolades; among them, he was a special advisor to three consecutive UN Secretaries-General, once hailed as the most important economist in the world by *The New York Times*, a co-recipient of the Blue Planet Prize for environmental leadership, and a recipient of the Tang Prize for Sustainable Development. Resting on his laurels, however, is the last thing anyone expects Sachs to do.

On August 10, Prof. Sachs's tireless service to humanity—as he navigated the streets of Stintino, Sardinia, in 30-degree-Celsius heat—was evident in the generous sharing of his time and expertise with a multitude of online participants from over 35 countries. They had gathered to hear him at the launch of Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic's Certified Economic Diplomat program at the Institute of Economics and Finance (IEF) in Ghana.

Sachs kicked off his astute talk by disclosing his recent initiatives for Africa's development. Together with Kevin Urama, the Chief Economist at the African Development Bank (AfDB), the multi-skilled Sachs has been developing a strategy to break the poverty cycle in Africa. The team led by the AfDB is set to present their proposal for Africa's rapid growth at the African Union Summit.

In sharing the core strategy, Sachs explicated how Africa can achieve very rapid development over the next 40 years—in the same way China did during 1980–2020 and India is doing today, a trajectory that started around 2000.

"Back in 1980, China was impoverished and not even on the world's radar screen economically. In fact, its poverty rate was higher than in Africa today. However, China opened up and took important policy measures. Over the next 40 years, not only has it become a high-income economy, but also the world's largest economy in total GDP measured at purchasing-power parity (PPP)," Sachs explained, holding China up as a model for Africa.

Sachs went on to state that Africa could achieve the same success. "Africa has 1.4 billion people, roughly the same population as China and India. While India is about 15 to 20 years behind China in its economic trajectory, it has also been experiencing very high growth. China started emerging in 1980 and India around 2000. For Africa, that time is now."

However, Sachs understood it would take more than a large population to drive rapid growth and was careful to highlight the significant distinctions between the three entities. "There is one big difference. Following the colonial period, India remained one large country (actually, British India became three countries: India, Pakistan, and later Bangladesh). China, of course, remained one unified state despite encountering Japan's imperialistic ambitions and a century of reckless behavior by the European powers. Africa, on the other hand, has to deal with the ongoing difficulties associated with

its colonial legacy, notably Europe's division of Africa into 55 states."

Sachs proceeded to explain that the 55 individual African states are too small on their own to achieve the global role and competitiveness they require. However, if Africa truly creates a political, economic, financial, and eventually monetary union, it will be able to emulate the great successes of China and India. With a single market, a unified financial system, and increasing monetary integration, Africa will be well-positioned to create a unified economic space, deeply interconnected by trans-boundary infrastructure for:

- Power and energy networks
- Fiber-optic communications
- Roads, rail, and shipping lanes
- Ecosystem and natural resource management

Moreover, with a strong union, Africa will be positioned to play a vital global diplomatic role, helping to lead global decision-making in key international forums.

It is worth recalling that during India's G20 Presidency in New Delhi, the African Union was made a permanent member of the G20. None could be happier than the 1.4 billion Africans who have finally been given a major voice in deliberations on global economic issues—and Sachs, who for years has been advocating indefatigably for the AU to be given a seat at the table.

"An integrated and ambitious African Union (AU) can achieve the kind of growth that China and India have experienced,"

Sachs paused before adding determinedly, "I want the AU to be a giant in the same way."

Like other global leaders, Sachs is a visionary with ambitious goals, but this is where their similarity ends. Sachs understands the roadmap from A to Z and is keenly aware of what Africa needs to achieve this high, sustained growth that he wholly believes lies within the region's potential.

Sachs explained that Africa needs a large internal market and a strong diplomatic presence, the latter made possible by its representation at the G20 (which he hopes will soon be appropriately relabeled as the G21) and the UN. Africa also needs high investments across all major classes of capital, with human capital being the most important; hence, the need to provide universal quality education. Sachs also indicated that Africa needs rapid electrification and digital access so that every household can get lit up and online.

Last but not least, Sachs said that Africa needs international loan financing with interest rates comparable to those granted to the United States. "The irony here is, the US actually has a higher debt-to-GDP ratio than most African countries (and other G7 countries such as Italy and Japan have even higher debt-to-GDP ratios), yet the credit rating agencies have assigned African sovereign borrowers very bad credit ratings. However, Africa has higher growth potential than the high-income countries and typically lower ratios of debt to GDP. The rating agencies are wrong in their methodology, and the methodology and ratings need to be fixed. If Africa cannot borrow on reasonable terms—meaning low interest rates and long maturities—then Africa will remain poor."

Another trait that distinguishes Sachs from other leaders lies in the consistency of his messaging. Time and again, he has advocated for a multipolar world where parameters for honest dialogue between developing and developed countries could be established, making meaningful strides toward a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable world.

"I want a world of regions dealing with one another. We are one world, interconnected, and we ought to make peace. The mindset of the US is such that it has to be number one, and everyone has to follow what it says—that creates a lot of friction," Sachs lamented.

"I like the BRICS. Now expanded to ten countries, it comprises around 46% of the world population and 36% of the world GDP (PPP). It's a very good group that has come about because its members do not want to be bossed around by the US," he added.

As Sachs brought his talk to a conclusion, a wide smile beamed across his face, radiating contagious and inspiring hope for Africa. Sachs left the audience with an earnest and heartening reminder: the world is much safer if we cooperate with one another.

Lily Ong

3. Beautiful Minds for Africa

Abstract

The launch of the 2024 Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) program, organized by Ghana's Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in cooperation with European partners, offered a high-level platform for reflection on the role of economic diplomacy in Africa's development trajectory (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). At the invitation of the program's concept originator, Professor Anis H. Bajrektarevic, two influential figures—economist Jeffrey Sachs and Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, Secretary General of the Developing 8 Organization for Economic Cooperation—delivered keynote interventions that highlighted complementary perspectives on Africa's economic potential and the strategic importance of diplomacy in a rapidly changing global environment.

While focusing on different dimensions of development, both speakers articulated a converging vision centered on strategic cooperation, market integration, investment, and institutional capacity. Sachs emphasized Africa's long-term development prospects, drawing parallels with China's transformation from a low-income to a high-income economy through coordinated policies, infrastructure investment, and human capital development (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35). Ambassador Isiaka, in turn, highlighted the role of multilateral cooperation and

economic diplomacy in navigating global disruptions and strengthening the position of developing economies within international decision-making processes (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, n.d.).

This article situates these interventions within the broader context of global economic restructuring, characterized by demographic shifts, technological change, and increasing interdependence. Africa, with a population comparable to that of China and India, is standing at an early but decisive stage of its development journey (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35). According to Sachs, Africa's success depends on its ability to overcome political fragmentation, integrate markets, and build large-scale infrastructure networks capable of supporting continental growth (Sachs, 2020).

Ambassador Isiaka's contribution reinforces this perspective by highlighting the experience of the D-8 Organization, which seeks to enhance economic cooperation, trade, and global representation among its member states (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, n.d.). His remarks underscore the growing relevance of economic diplomacy as a tool for addressing global crises and fostering sustainable development. By bringing together these two perspectives, this analysis underscores the importance of education, institutional cooperation, and diplomatic capacity building in shaping Africa's future. The Certified Economic Diplomat program is a concrete initiative designed to equip current and future diplomats with the skills required to translate strategic visions into effective economic and diplomatic action (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024).

1. Setting the Scene: Economic Diplomacy and Africa's Future

The launch of the 2024 Certified Economic Diplomat program, organized by Ghana's Institute of Economics & Finance together with its European partners, provided a timely moment to reflect on Africa's economic future and on the evolving role of diplomacy in a rapidly changing global context (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). At the invitation of the program's concept originator, Professor Anis H. Bajrektarevic, two prominent voices—economist Jeffrey Sachs and Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, Secretary General of the Developing 8 Organization for Economic Cooperation—delivered keynote speeches that placed economic diplomacy at the center of Africa's development debate.

Although their interventions addressed different dimensions of development, both speakers conveyed a shared message: Africa's long-term growth cannot rely solely on natural resources or demographic trends. Instead, it requires:

- Strategic cross-border cooperation
- Stronger regulatory and state institutions
- A more effective use of diplomacy as a tool for structural economic transformation

The CED program thus emerged as an appropriate institutional framework for situating these reflections within a broader effort to professionalize economic diplomacy and strengthen Africa's engagement with the global economy (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024).

2. Jeffrey Sachs on Africa's Development Potential

Jeffrey Sachs framed Africa's current economic position through a comparative perspective, drawing parallels with China's transformation from a low-income economy into a global economic power. He emphasized that Africa's population, approaching 1.5 billion people, represents a scale comparable to that of China and India and therefore constitutes a major strategic asset (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35). At the same time, he noted that Africa is only at the beginning of its sustained growth trajectory.

According to Sachs, this developmental gap is not the result of limited potential but of historical variations in long-term policy choices and development strategies (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35). Sachs highlighted that China's rise was driven by deliberate and coordinated policies, including large-scale public investment, long-term planning, and systematic integration into global markets (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35). For Africa, he argued, the objective should not be mechanical imitation but strategic adaptation. Development strategies must be aligned with local realities while strengthening engagement in global economic diplomacy. In this process, diplomats play a central role by connecting domestic development priorities with international investment, trade, and cooperation (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35).

3. Unification, Market Integration, and Global Influence

A central theme of Sachs' intervention concerned Africa's political and economic fragmentation. He observed that the division of the continent into 54 sovereign states, largely shaped

by colonial legacies, limits Africa's economic scale and weakens its collective bargaining power (Sachs, 2020). This structural fragmentation increases transaction costs, complicates infrastructure development, and reduces market efficiency, ultimately constraining long-term growth (Sachs, 2020).

Sachs argued that deeper integration could fundamentally alter this dynamic. Coordinated policies in transport, energy, and trade would allow Africa to function more effectively as a single economic space—an idea he described metaphorically as operating under "one sky" (Sachs, 2020). Such integration would expand internal markets and enhance Africa's diplomatic influence at the global level. In this context, he referred to the African Union's inclusion in the G20 as an important structural step toward greater global recognition (African Union, 2023), while emphasizing that real influence depends on concrete integration efforts and sustained policy coordination (Sachs, 2020).

4. Infrastructure, Human Capital, and Financial Access

Sachs identified infrastructure, education, and access to finance as three closely interconnected pillars of Africa's development (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58). Infrastructure serves as a foundational requirement for economic participation, enabling trade, mobility, and access to resources. Investments in electricity, transport corridors, and digital connectivity are essential for reducing regional disparities and supporting the emergence of integrated markets (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58).

Human capital development was equally central to his analysis. Sachs argued that educational attainment levels are a de-

cisive factor in long-term economic success (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58). With average schooling in Africa estimated at around six years, he stressed the urgency of expanding education systems to support innovation, productivity, and technological adoption (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58). Increasing years of schooling was presented not only as a social objective but also as a strategic investment in economic competitiveness (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58). Regarding financial access, Sachs highlighted persistent inequalities in global capital markets. While advanced economies are able to borrow at low interest rates despite high debt levels, African countries often face much higher costs (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58). Rather than focusing exclusively on debt cancellation, he argued for fairer access to affordable, long-term financing as a prerequisite for sustainable development (Sachs, 2015, pp. 54–58).

5. Global Partnerships and a Multipolar Vision

Sachs also emphasized the importance of global partnerships in advancing Africa's development goals. Cooperation with major economic actors, particularly China, the United States, and the European Union, was described as essential for attracting investment, accessing technology, and expanding markets (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35). China was presented both as a development reference point and as a strategic partner with whom Africa could pursue mutually beneficial cooperation (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–35).

These partnerships were framed within a broader vision of a multipolar global economy. Sachs argued that addressing global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and poverty requires cooperative frameworks in which Africa, along-

side Asia and Latin America, plays a more active and influential role (Sachs, 2020). In this context, economic diplomacy becomes not only a national instrument but also a mechanism for collective global problem-solving (Sachs, 2020).

6. Ambassador Isiaka and the Role of the D-8 Organization

Complementing Sachs' macroeconomic perspective, Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam offered insights grounded in multilateral cooperation and diplomatic practice. Speaking from the headquarters of the Developing 8 Organization for Economic Cooperation in Istanbul, he reflected on how recent global disruptions, including the COVID-19 pandemic and rising geopolitical tensions, have highlighted the importance of economic diplomacy for developing economies (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, n.d.).

The D-8 Organization, which brings together Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Türkiye, aims to strengthen economic cooperation among its members, expand trade, and improve their participation in international economic decision-making (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, n.d.). With a combined population exceeding 1.3 billion and a rapidly growing aggregate GDP, the organization illustrates how coordinated diplomacy can amplify the voice and influence of developing countries (D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, n.d.).

7. Economic Diplomacy, Training, and Institutional Capacity

A key point emphasized by Ambassador Isiaka was the im-

portance of professional training in strengthening economic diplomacy. He praised the Certified Economic Diplomat program and its collaboration with IFIMES for offering a structured, research-based approach to diplomatic education (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). According to Isiaka, equipping diplomats with analytical tools and practical knowledge is essential for navigating complex economic environments and responding effectively to global crises (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024).

This emphasis on training echoed Sachs' broader message. Ambitious development strategies require skilled professionals capable of translating vision into action (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–58). Economic diplomacy therefore depends not only on ideas and policies but also on institutional capacity, competence, and continuous learning (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–58).

8. Conclusion

The contributions of Jeffrey Sachs and Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam converged on a shared assessment of Africa's development prospects. Africa's potential lies not only in its demographic scale and resource endowments but also in its ability to integrate markets, invest in people and infrastructure, and engage strategically with the global economy through effective economic diplomacy (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–58; D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, n.d.).

Within this context, the Certified Economic Diplomat program represents a concrete institutional response to the challenges identified by both speakers. By strengthening diplomatic skills and fostering a deeper understanding of econom-

ic dynamics, the program seeks to bridge the gap between strategic vision and practical implementation (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). In doing so, it contributes to enhancing Africa's diplomatic capacity and supports the continent's aspiration to play a more central role in a multipolar and increasingly interconnected global system (Sachs, 2015, pp. 32–58).

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4. Currently in EU-Africa Relations

Abstract

The second session of the 2024 Certified Economic Diplomat program, a collaborative initiative of Ghana's Institute of Economics & Finance and its European partners, offered an in-depth examination of current European Union–Africa relations (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). A central contribution to this session came from His Excellency Roland Kobia, Ambassador of the European Union to Ethiopia, where the headquarters of the African Union is located. Drawing on extensive diplomatic experience across Africa, Asia, and Europe, Ambassador Kobia provided a comprehensive overview of the European Union's political, economic, and diplomatic engagement with the African continent (European Commission, 2023).

The article situates Ambassador Kobia's intervention within the broader framework of contemporary economic diplomacy, focusing on international norm setting, globalization, foreign direct investment competition, state sovereignty in international economic and eco-digital relations, and traditional diplomatic practices. Particular attention is devoted to the European Union's identity as a political actor, its commitment to multilateralism, and its evolving role in peacebuilding, development cooperation, and trade relations with Africa (European Commission, 2023; World Trade Organization, 2023).

Ambassador Kobia emphasized the European Union's internal achievement of peace following centuries of conflict and its gradual transformation into a global promoter of stability and cooperation (European Union, 2012). He highlighted the EU's role as the largest provider of official development assistance to Africa, underlining the importance of non-repayable grants that support African ownership of development priorities (European Commission, 2023). Trade relations were presented as a cornerstone of EU–Africa relations, particularly through mechanisms such as the Everything But Arms scheme, which grants least developed countries duty-free and quota-free access to the European market (European Commission, 2023).

Beyond development aid and trade, the article explores the EU's engagement through investment, institutional coordination under the Team Europe approach, and the activities of the European Investment Bank and European chambers of commerce (European Investment Bank, 2023). Ambassador Kobia's reflections on universal values, multilateralism, and the challenges facing the current international order provide a broader political context for understanding EU–Africa relations in an era marked by geopolitical competition and uncertainty (World Trade Organization, 2023).

By examining these themes, the article highlights the relevance of economic diplomacy training initiatives such as the Certified Economic Diplomat program in preparing future leaders to navigate complex international partnerships and contribute to a more stable, cooperative, and rules-based global system (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024).

1. Setting the Context: EU–Africa Relations and Economic Diplomacy

Another critical aspect concerns the integration of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), into development programs and trade relations between the EU and Africa. AI is becoming a key driver of innovation in Africa, particularly in sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and financial services. Collaboration between the EU and African partners could be strengthened through joint initiatives for AI adoption, boosting competitiveness and supporting the continent's economic growth.

It was a privilege to listen to His Excellency Roland Kobia, Ambassador of the European Union to Ethiopia, during the second session of the Certified Economic Diplomat program (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). Ethiopia hosts the headquarters of the African Union, which makes the ambassador's perspective particularly relevant for understanding the political and diplomatic interface between Europe and Africa. The program itself examines key dimensions of contemporary economic diplomacy, including globalization, international norm setting, foreign direct investment competition, state sovereignty in economic and eco-digital relations, and traditional diplomatic practice (European Commission, 2023).

Ambassador Kobia's participation was especially significant given his election by his peers as President of the Bureau of EU Ambassadors from 2022 to 2024. His intervention reflected both institutional continuity and personal experience, offering participants an insider's view of how the European

Union positions itself as a diplomatic and political actor in Africa (European Commission, 2023).

2. Diplomatic Experience and Institutional Continuity

Ambassador Kobia's diplomatic career spans several decades and regions, providing a rare breadth of perspective on international relations. Prior to his current appointment, he served as European Union Special Envoy for Afghanistan from 2017 to 2021, Head of the EU Delegation to Myanmar from 2013 to 2017, and EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan from 2009 to 2013. He also worked as a diplomatic advisor in the private office of the European Commissioner for Energy and was a member of the European External Action Service negotiation team (European Commission, 2023).

His experience in Africa includes service as Deputy Head of Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and as Head of Regional Political Affairs in Kenya, where he was responsible for political and peace processes across twelve countries in the Horn of Africa and the African Great Lakes region. In addition, he acted as an EU negotiator at the World Intellectual Property Organization and contributed to the accession process of seven countries to the European Union (European Commission, 2023). This professional background framed his remarks with a strong sense of institutional memory and diplomatic continuity.

3. The European Union as a Political and Diplomatic Actor

During his address, Ambassador Kobia emphasized that the European Union is not merely a development body or a fi-

nancial institution, but a genuine political entity with political responsibilities. The EU maintains one of the world's largest diplomatic services, with 145 delegations representing the interests of its 27 member states globally. Its guiding principle, *unity in diversity*, reflects an internal commitment to cooperation that also shapes its external action (European Commission, 2023).

He recalled that the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its contribution to peace in Europe after centuries of conflict (European Union, 2012). According to Ambassador Kobia, the EU's internal success in maintaining peace since the mid-twentieth century has informed its external engagement, allowing it to evolve into an actor that actively promotes peace, security, and stability beyond its borders (European Union, 2012).

4. Development Assistance, Trade, and Investment

Additionally, artificial intelligence offers enormous potential to stimulate new investment sectors. African countries, with their rapid rate of technological adoption, are becoming hubs for AI-driven startups. EU–Africa collaboration in the AI field could transform Africa into a technology innovation center, creating high-skilled jobs and fostering sustainable economic growth (European Commission, 2023).

Ambassador Kobia highlighted the European Union's role as the largest official development assistance donor to Africa. More than half of the assistance provided to the African Union takes the form of non-repayable grants rather than loans, a model designed to support African ownership of de-

velopment priorities (European Commission, 2023). Trade was presented as a central pillar of EU–Africa relations. The European Union is one of Africa's leading trading partners and a major source of foreign direct investment. Through the Everything But Arms scheme, least developed countries are granted duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market for all products except arms and ammunition (European Commission, 2023).

5. Investment, Employment, and the Role of European Institutions

The AI sector, if properly developed, can make investments more targeted and effective. AI technologies can be used to analyze data and optimize investments in infrastructure, education, and healthcare. In Africa, where infrastructure challenges are still significant, the adoption of AI can improve the efficiency of development projects, reducing costs and accelerating outcomes (European Commission, 2023).

Beyond trade and development aid, Ambassador Kobia emphasized the importance of investment and private sector engagement. The European Investment Bank (EIB), as the financial arm of the European Union, supports projects in education, health, social services, and infrastructure, as well as other areas that are sometimes politically sensitive, such as migration (European Investment Bank, 2023).

These investments are complemented by the activities of European chambers of commerce across Africa. In Ethiopia, for example, the European Chamber of Commerce plays a significant role in job creation, generating tens of thousands of

direct jobs and supporting the livelihoods of many families (European Investment Bank, 2023).

6. Team Europe and Policy Coordination

Another important area for coordination could be artificial intelligence. Sharing best practices between the EU and African countries in AI regulation, AI ethics, and data governance is crucial to ensure that the adoption of these technologies happens responsibly and sustainably (European Commission, 2023). Team Europe could expand its activities to include training programs and support for African leaders in AI, thus creating a bridge for technological cooperation and innovation.

Ambassador Kobia explained that EU delegations operate under a permanent presidency model on the ground, ensuring coordination between EU institutions and member states. This approach, now referred to as Team Europe, seeks to enhance coherence and impact by aligning policies, resources, and political messages (European Commission, 2023).

7. Universal Values, Multilateralism, and the International Order

In concluding his remarks, Ambassador Kobia addressed the sensitive issue of universal values and the evolving international order. He emphasized that the principles promoted by the European Union in Africa are not European values but universal commitments rooted in the United Nations framework (World Trade Organization, 2023). These include de-

mocracy, the rule of law, justice, respect for territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders.

He expressed concern over the increasing challenge to multilateralism and the weakening of institutions such as the World Trade Organization (World Trade Organization, 2023). According to Ambassador Kobia, rejecting common norms without offering clear alternatives risks chaos, confrontation, and conflict. While acknowledging that the international order can evolve, he stressed the importance of transparency, cooperation, and respect for shared rules in shaping any future global framework (World Trade Organization, 2023).

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, artificial intelligence represents a key frontier for the future of EU–Africa relations. Investing in joint AI initiatives will not only strengthen economic ties but also contribute to creating an inclusive digital ecosystem that supports economic growth, security, and resilience for the African continent in an increasingly interconnected world (European Commission, 2023). Ambassador Roland Kobia's intervention offered a comprehensive and candid overview of the European Union's engagement with Africa across diplomacy, development, trade, investment, and values (European Commission, 2023; European Investment Bank, 2023).

His reflections underscored the EU's identity as a political actor committed to multilateralism, partnership, and rules-based cooperation, while also highlighting the complexity of EU–Africa relations in a period of geopolitical uncertainty (European Commission, 2023). Once again, the Certified

Economic Diplomat program emerged as a unique platform for engaging with these issues (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024). By bringing together experienced practitioners and emerging leaders from governmental, intergovernmental, civil, and corporate sectors, the program provides an exceptional setting for understanding contemporary economic diplomacy. In doing so, it contributes to preparing future decision-makers to navigate complex international partnerships and to support a more stable and cooperative global system (Institute of Economics & Finance, 2024).

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5. Africa in the AI Era

Abstract

Africa is once again at a pivotal moment in its historical trajectory, confronted with a technological transition that will profoundly shape its economic, social, and cultural future. The rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and risks for the continent. If Africa fails to navigate the AI transition strategically, the technological gap between the continent and the rest of the world risks widening in ways that may prove difficult to reverse. In this context, collaborative initiatives such as the Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) program, developed by Ghana's Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in cooperation with international academic and policy partners, acquire particular relevance.

This article examines Africa's position in the AI era through three interrelated dimensions: data infrastructure, knowledge representation, and cultural wisdom. It highlights how Africa's limited data infrastructure and reliance on foreign data storage constrain digital sovereignty, economic development, and innovation. At the same time, the underrepresentation of African voices in global digital knowledge platforms contributes to distorted narratives and limits Africa's ability to shape future AI systems. Beyond infrastructure and knowledge, the article emphasizes the importance of Africa's ethical and cultural heritage. Traditional values transmitted through

oral traditions and communal practices risk being excluded from AI systems largely developed outside the continent. This exclusion may lead to biased or culturally insensitive technologies.

The article argues that addressing these challenges requires coordinated action. Investment in local data infrastructure, data governance frameworks, the promotion of local digital content, and the integration of AI literacy into education systems are essential steps. Equally important is Africa's participation in global AI governance, advocating for ethical approaches rooted in African perspectives such as *Ubuntu*.

By framing artificial intelligence as a matter of economic diplomacy, cultural representation, and strategic sovereignty, the article underscores the importance of informed leadership and professional training. Africa's ability to benefit from the AI revolution depends on its capacity to safeguard data, knowledge, and wisdom while shaping technologies aligned with its values and aspirations.

1. Africa at a Critical Technological Crossroads

Africa today stands at a decisive technological crossroads. The acceleration of artificial intelligence development is reshaping global economies, governance models, and social relations. For Africa, the AI transition represents both a potential catalyst for inclusive growth and a risk of deeper marginalization if strategic choices are not made in time. Identifying the challenge is already a crucial step toward addressing it.

In this context, initiatives that strengthen diplomatic, economic, and technological literacy are particularly relevant. Programs such as the Certified Economic Diplomat program contribute to framing AI not only as a technical issue but as a strategic matter linked to sovereignty, development, and international cooperation.

2. Data Infrastructure and Digital Dependence

Africa's data infrastructure remains underdeveloped compared to other regions. The continent hosts a very limited number of data centers relative to its population and economic potential, forcing governments, companies, and institutions to store data abroad (GSMA, 2023). This external dependence raises concerns related to data security, privacy, regulatory oversight, and economic value extraction.

As data becomes a central resource for AI development, limited domestic control over data constrains Africa's capacity to innovate and build locally relevant digital solutions. Strengthening data governance and investing in domestic infrastructure are therefore essential components of Africa's digital sovereignty (OECD, 2022).

3. Knowledge Representation in the Digital Space

Another major challenge concerns the representation of African knowledge in the digital domain. African perspectives, languages, and historical narratives remain underrepresented in global digital knowledge repositories. This imbalance affects not only how Africa is portrayed globally but also the datasets that train AI systems (Graham, De Sabbata, & Zook, 2015).

When African knowledge is absent or marginal, AI technologies risk reinforcing existing biases and overlooking local contexts. Bridging this gap requires targeted policies that support digital content creation, linguistic diversity, and local participation in global knowledge platforms.

4. Cultural Wisdom and Ethical AI

Africa's cultural heritage is deeply rooted in communal ethics, oral traditions, and social values developed over centuries. In the AI era, these forms of wisdom risk being sidelined by technologies trained primarily on Western datasets and assumptions. This creates the risk of culturally misaligned or ethically problematic AI applications.

Ethical frameworks inspired by African philosophies, such as *Ubuntu*, offer valuable perspectives for global AI governance. *Ubuntu* emphasizes interdependence, collective responsibility, and human dignity—principles that can enrich ongoing international discussions on ethical AI development (Metz, 2011; UNESCO, 2021).

5. Strategic Actions for Africa's AI Future

Addressing the challenges of artificial intelligence requires coordinated action across multiple policy domains. Investment in data infrastructure and cloud services is essential, often through public-private partnerships. Developing clear data governance frameworks can help retain economic value and strengthen trust in digital systems.

Equally important is investment in human capital. Integrating digital and AI literacy into education systems will empower

future generations to participate actively in the global knowledge economy. Supporting local content creation and research ecosystems will further enhance Africa's ability to shape AI technologies aligned with its social and cultural realities.

6. Conclusion

Africa's position in the AI era is not predetermined. The continent's young population, growing digital ecosystems, and rich cultural heritage provide a strong foundation for shaping a distinctive and inclusive digital future. However, this potential can only be realized through strategic choices that prioritize data sovereignty, knowledge representation, and ethical governance.

By investing in infrastructure, promoting African knowledge, and embedding cultural values into AI governance, Africa can move beyond passive adaptation and actively shape the digital transformation. Artificial intelligence, approached through the lens of economic diplomacy and strategic cooperation, can become a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion.

Dr. Jovan Kurbalija

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6. Africa's Digital Dilemma

Abstract

In the current phase of global technological transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) is redefining economic power, governance structures, and social organization. Data has become a strategic resource, comparable in importance to oil during the industrial era. For Africa, this transformation represents a decisive crossroads. If the continent does not adopt a coherent and strategic approach to artificial intelligence, existing digital and economic inequalities risk deepening, with long-term consequences for development and sovereignty. Drawing on the reflections of Dr. Jovan Kurbalija, a leading expert in digital governance, this article examines Africa's digital dilemma as discussed during the Top Heads Talk lecture of the Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) Program organized by Ghana's Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in collaboration with Professor Anis H. Bajrektarevic and European partners.

The article explores Africa's position in the AI era through four interconnected dimensions: data infrastructure, digital dependence, knowledge representation, and internet governance. It highlights how Africa's limited data infrastructure and reliance on foreign data storage facilities undermine digital sovereignty and restrict the continent's ability to fully benefit from AI-driven innovation. Despite Africa's demographic potential and expanding digital markets, the continent hosts a

disproportionately small number of data centers, forcing governments and companies to store sensitive data abroad. The article further addresses Africa's dependence on submarine cable infrastructure and the resulting vulnerabilities related to the concentration of connectivity and geopolitical risk. Beyond physical infrastructure, it examines the importance of data sovereignty and the need for African countries to retain control over critical data resources as a foundation for economic empowerment.

A central focus is placed on internet governance and multistakeholder cooperation. Effective digital governance requires the active participation of governments, private sector actors, civil society, and international institutions. Africa's engagement in global governance forums is presented as essential for shaping fair, inclusive, and development-oriented digital rules.

By framing artificial intelligence as an issue of economic diplomacy, strategic awareness, and governance, the article underscores the importance of capacity building and informed leadership. Africa's digital future will depend on its ability to reclaim control over data, strengthen governance frameworks, and position itself as an active participant in the global digital economy.

1. Africa at a Decisive Digital Crossroads

Africa is entering a phase of technological transformation that will significantly influence its economic and political trajectory. Artificial intelligence is reshaping global production systems, public administration, and international competition.

Dr. Jovan Kurbalija warned that without a deliberate strategy, Africa risks remaining a passive consumer of AI technologies developed elsewhere, rather than an active contributor and beneficiary.

This concern situates AI within the broader field of economic diplomacy. Digital transformation is no longer a purely technical matter but a strategic issue linked to sovereignty, competitiveness, and global positioning. Recognizing this reality is the first step toward meaningful action.

2. Data Infrastructure and External Dependence

A core challenge facing Africa in the AI era is the underdevelopment of its data infrastructure. The continent hosts only a limited number of data centers relative to its population and economic size. As a result, African data is largely stored and processed outside the continent, creating a structural dependence on external actors (African Union Commission, 2022).

This reliance raises concerns related to data security, privacy, and regulatory oversight. More importantly, it constrains Africa's ability to extract economic value from data, which is the primary input for artificial intelligence systems. Without domestic infrastructure, African countries struggle to develop local AI ecosystems and innovation capacity.

3. Connectivity, Submarine Cables, and Digital Vulnerability

Africa's digital connectivity relies heavily on submarine cable systems, which carry the vast majority of international data

traffic. While these cables are essential for global communication, their geographic concentration creates vulnerabilities. Connectivity is largely routed through a limited number of coastal hubs, increasing exposure to disruptions caused by natural events, accidents, or geopolitical tensions (International Cable Protection Committee, 2022).

Strengthening digital resilience requires diversifying access points, improving redundancy, and investing in complementary terrestrial infrastructure. These measures are critical for ensuring stable and secure connectivity in an AI-driven economy.

4. Data Sovereignty as Economic Empowerment

Dr. Kurbalija emphasized that data sovereignty is not solely a security concern but a prerequisite for economic empowerment. Retaining sensitive data related to health, identity, and public administration within national borders allows governments to develop policies tailored to local needs and priorities. Data localization frameworks, when carefully designed, can support domestic innovation, encourage investment in local infrastructure, and foster trust in digital systems (European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, 2023). For Africa, data sovereignty represents a strategic tool for reducing dependency and increasing participation in the global digital economy.

5. Internet Governance and Multistakeholder Cooperation

Effective internet governance is a central pillar of Africa's digital future. Governance frameworks must balance innovation, security, and inclusion while ensuring that digital develop-

ment aligns with broader societal goals. Internet governance is inherently multistakeholder in nature, involving governments, private companies, civil society, and international organizations. Africa's active participation in global governance forums is essential to ensure that emerging norms and standards reflect its development priorities. Strengthening institutional capacity and diplomatic engagement in these forums enhances Africa's ability to influence global digital policy (Internet Society, 2023).

6. Strategic Awareness and Capacity Building

The challenges outlined in Dr. Kurbalija's lecture point to the importance of strategic awareness and professional training. Digital transformation requires leaders who understand the intersection of technology, economics, and governance. Capacity-building initiatives help bridge the gap between technical expertise and policymaking. Training programs focused on economic diplomacy provide a platform for developing this integrated understanding, enabling African policymakers and diplomats to engage more effectively in international digital negotiations.

7. Conclusion

Africa's digital dilemma in the AI era is not defined by a lack of potential, but by structural constraints and strategic choices. The continent's growing population, expanding digital markets, and increasing global relevance provide a strong foundation for digital development. However, without investment in data infrastructure, resilient connectivity, and effective gover-

nance frameworks, Africa risks remaining on the margins of the AI revolution.

By prioritizing data sovereignty, strengthening internet governance, and enhancing strategic capacity, Africa can transform artificial intelligence into a driver of inclusive growth and autonomy. Approached through the lens of economic diplomacy and global cooperation, AI can become a tool for empowerment rather than dependency.

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7. Multilateralism Has No Alternative

Abstract

This executive program was designed to equip emerging leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills to address contemporary global challenges, particularly in the fields of security, diplomacy, and economic cooperation. Launched by a prominent African think tank in partnership with European academic institutions, cultural diplomacy bodies, and media outlets, the program aims to foster collaboration and understanding across continents. The program focuses on critical areas such as the erosion of multilateralism, the importance of conflict prevention, the geopolitics of security, and the complex dynamics that define the African and European regions.

Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, former Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), delivered an in-depth lecture that provided participants with a unique perspective on global security issues. His lecture emphasized the role of international diplomacy in addressing the multifaceted security challenges facing both Europe and Africa. Zannier explored topics such as the crisis of multilateralism, the need for more inclusive global governance, and the importance of regional cooperation in

addressing emerging security threats. He also shed light on the evolving role of organizations like the OSCE, the UN, and the African Union (AU) in the context of peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and the promotion of democratic institutions. Particularly relevant to the African context, Ambassador Zannier discussed the unique security challenges facing the continent, including regional conflicts, political instability, and the profound impact of climate change on security and human displacement.

His lecture underscored the importance of an integrated approach to security—one that combines traditional diplomacy with innovative solutions such as technology and environmental cooperation. The lecture also addressed the growing need for proactive crisis management and the development of early-warning systems to prevent the escalation of conflicts.

In the rapidly evolving global landscape, future leaders must be equipped with the tools to navigate the complexities of international relations. The insights provided in this program will play a crucial role in shaping the next generation of diplomats and leaders, prepared to confront the challenges of an interconnected world.

1. Introduction to the Executive Program

The executive program was conceived as a response to the growing need for skilled leadership in a world increasingly marked by complex geopolitical, economic, and security challenges. Drawing inspiration from successful initiatives in

Europe, such as those in Vienna and Geneva, the program was launched independently by one of Africa's leading think tanks, in collaboration with European partners, including academic institutions, think tanks, cultural diplomacy groups, and media outlets.

This program is designed to offer emerging leaders practical tools and insights into global diplomacy, economic cooperation, and security issues. It is part of the Institute's Certified Economic Diplomat Program, conceptualized by Professor Anis H. Bajrektarevic, a renowned expert in international relations and diplomacy. The goal of the program is to bridge the gap between theory and practice in diplomacy, providing participants with the knowledge to engage in the multifaceted challenges of today's world.

A key feature of this program is its focus on multilateralism, a critical aspect in addressing global issues such as climate change, security threats, and economic inequalities. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration among international organizations, governments, and civil society to resolve issues that transcend national borders.

Ambassador Lamberto Zannier's lecture serves as a core element of the program, offering a wealth of experience in international diplomacy. His insights provide participants with a clear understanding of the OSCE's role in the modern geopolitical landscape, particularly in relation to Europe and Africa, and underscore the importance of multilateral cooperation in overcoming global challenges. This program is not only for

those pursuing careers in diplomacy but also for leaders in business, politics, and civil society who seek to understand the intricate dynamics that shape global governance.

2. Security Challenges Analysis

The global security landscape is constantly evolving, shaped by an array of political, economic, and environmental factors. In his lecture, Ambassador Zannier provided a comprehensive analysis of the current security challenges in Europe, Africa, and the world, highlighting the complex and interdependent nature of contemporary threats.

In Europe, the post-Cold War era has seen a resurgence of regional tensions, especially in the wake of the conflict in Ukraine. The ongoing geopolitical fractures have destabilized the region and strained relations between Russia and the West. Additionally, the rise of transnational extremist groups has posed a significant threat to European security, leading to the redefinition of security priorities across the continent. In response, European states have been strengthening their collective defense mechanisms, notably through NATO, while also seeking diplomatic solutions to prevent further escalation of conflicts (Müller, 2020).

Africa, meanwhile, faces its own set of unique security challenges. These range from political instability and armed conflict to humanitarian crises driven by climate change. Region-

al conflicts, such as those in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, have led to significant displacement of populations and created fertile ground for extremist organizations. The increasing impact of climate change exacerbates these issues by contributing to resource shortages, environmental degradation, and mass migration. The African Union and various regional economic communities (RECs) are working to address these security concerns through peacekeeping missions, conflict mediation, and regional cooperation. However, the challenges are vast, and solutions often require the concerted effort of international organizations like the United Nations and the OSCE (United Nations, 2022).

One of the most pressing challenges in the contemporary security environment is the erosion of multilateralism. As international institutions face increasing pressures from rising nationalism and protectionism, it becomes more difficult to implement coordinated responses to global crises. The United Nations, the African Union, and the OSCE all face difficulties in adapting to these changes, often finding themselves sidelined in favor of national or bilateral approaches. Nonetheless, multilateral diplomacy remains an essential tool in managing the interconnected crises of the modern world, and efforts to strengthen international institutions must continue (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

3. Ambassador Zannier's Experience

Ambassador Zannier is a distinguished expert of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, a career diplomat with top-level ex-

perience in the Italian Foreign Service and in international organizations, particularly within UN specialized agencies, focusing on conflict prevention, human dimension, and security affairs. Before this role, His Excellency served as:

- OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (2017–2020)
- OSCE Secretary General for two terms (2011–2017)
- UN Special Representative for Kosovo (2008–2011)
- Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (2002–2006)

His global experience in international diplomacy is exemplary, with a lifelong emphasis on conflict prevention (Zannier, 2015).

4. The OSCE and Its Three Dimensions

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest regional security-oriented intergovernmental organization in the world, with a unique mandate and operational framework. Established in 1975 under the Helsinki Final Act, it is composed of 57 participating states, spanning Europe, Central Asia, and North America. The OSCE is distinct because of its comprehensive approach to security, which is divided into three key dimensions:

1. **The Political-Military Dimension:** Focuses on

mechanisms for conflict prevention, arms control, and confidence-building measures between member states to ensure physical security and military transparency.

2. **The Economic and Environmental Dimension:** Addresses economic instability, water diplomacy, and ecological degradation, recognizing that environmental mismanagement directly undermines regional peace.

3. **The Human Dimension:** Emphasizes human rights, democratization, and the monitoring of electoral processes, asserting that internal state governance and respect for individual freedoms are essential pillars of international stability.

5. The Dissolution of Multinational States and OSCE Adaptation

The dissolution of multinational states, particularly in Eastern Europe during the late 20th century, marked a pivotal moment for international security and cooperation. The fall of the Soviet Union, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the partition of Czechoslovakia fundamentally altered the geopolitical landscape, creating new challenges for international organizations, including the OSCE. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the OSCE had to adapt rapidly to a changing world order. The disintegration of these states created a complex set of security concerns, ranging from ethnic conflicts and territori-

al disputes to economic instability. For instance, the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s led to violent conflicts and the emergence of new nation-states. The OSCE responded by deploying field operations, monitoring peace agreements, and supporting democratic transitions in the affected countries (Zannier, 2015). Similarly, the collapse of the Soviet Union created numerous frozen conflicts, such as those in Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria, which the OSCE continues to mediate.

The Charter of Paris for a New Europe, signed in 1990, marked the beginning of a new phase for the OSCE. This Charter emphasized the importance of a united Europe, founded on principles of democracy, human rights, and market economies. The shift in the OSCE's mandate reflected these new geopolitical realities, as the organization was tasked not only with traditional security concerns but also with assisting countries in transition through democratic reforms and post-conflict recovery (OSCE, 2020). The OSCE's response to the dissolution of multinational states has been marked by its focus on conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation. Through its comprehensive approach—encompassing military, economic, and human rights concerns—the OSCE continues to play a key role in stabilizing countries that are emerging from conflict or undergoing political and economic transitions. Its work remains vital as new challenges arise, including managing the complexities of state- building and promoting regional cooperation in a world increasingly defined by fragmentation and globalization(Zannier, 2015).

6. Artificial Intelligence and Security

During his lecture, Ambassador Zannier also touched on the growing impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in conflict management and diplomacy. AI could represent a key step in data analysis related to security and the prediction of international crises. For example, using AI to monitor human rights violations, analyze communications, and predict future conflicts could greatly enhance the international community's ability to intervene preventively (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

7. Expanding on Global Security and New Threats

Global security challenges are no longer limited to military conflicts but now include non-traditional threats such as climate change, cyberterrorism, and humanitarian crises. In Africa, security issues related to food security and internal conflicts are exacerbated by climate change, which leads to mass migration, famine, and political instability (United Nations, 2022). UN peacekeeping missions and African Union initiatives are crucial, but they often face significant obstacles related to resource limitations, political disagreements, and the lack of sustained local governance.

The rise of cybersecurity in global security policies has become an increasing concern. Protecting critical infrastructure, communication networks, and economic systems from cyberattacks is essential for maintaining national and international security. The rise of cyberterrorism and state-sponsored cyber warfare poses new threats to global peace, requir-

ing countries to adapt to an increasingly digital world (Müller, 2020).

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, Ambassador Zannier's lecture provided a timely and comprehensive analysis of the current global security landscape. It highlighted the increasing complexity of international relations and the growing importance of multilateral diplomacy in resolving contemporary issues. The challenges facing both Europe and Africa underscore the necessity for international cooperation, particularly in areas like conflict prevention, climate change mitigation, and cybersecurity. The lecture offered a nuanced perspective on the evolving role of institutions like the OSCE, the UN, and the African Union in addressing these challenges.

Ambassador Zannier's reflections on the current crisis in Europe and the Middle East, as well as the growing risks posed by climate change and cyber threats, serve as a call to action for future leaders. As geopolitical dynamics shift and new security threats emerge, the need for a proactive and coordinated international response has never been more urgent. However, the international community must overcome significant challenges, including resource limitations, political fragmentation, and the lack of effective early intervention strategies.

The lecture also emphasized the need for a shift in how the international community approaches security—moving from reactive crisis management to a focus on prevention and early

intervention. This approach will require greater investment in conflict prevention initiatives, technological advancements, and collaborative diplomacy. Ultimately, the future of global security will depend on the ability of international organizations to adapt to an ever-changing world and to foster cooperative relationships across regions and sectors.

This executive program, with its focus on diplomacy, security, and economic cooperation, provides a critical platform for emerging leaders to gain the insights and skills needed to navigate the complexities of global governance and international relations. The knowledge imparted through this program will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the development of future diplomatic efforts aimed at maintaining peace and stability in a rapidly changing world.

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8. UK and Africa for the Future

Following the great outcomes and lasting successes of similar programs in Europe (most notably in Vienna and Geneva), one of Africa's leading economic institutes, alongside its European academic, think-tank, media, and cultural diplomacy partners and its Asian and Latin American associates, launched this specialized executive program for future business and state executives.

As part of this notable series within the Institute's Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) Program, conceptualized and conducted by Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic, the former United Kingdom Defence Secretary, The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Hoon, delivered a highly informative and comprehensive lecture for the IEF participants and invited guests from academia and diplomatic practice.

During these intensive exchanges, Sir Geoffrey elaborated on his political career and his role within the Labour Party, contextualizing his experience within the broader historical framework of pre-modern and modern British political history. He shared detailed insights into the constitutional and political structure of the United Kingdom and its primary power structures. Additionally, he analyzed the political development and foreign policy of the nation across the post-World War I, interwar, and post-World War II eras.

The core themes that engaged participants throughout the open and candid lecture included:

- Post-war economic recovery and European integration processes
- The geopolitics of the Cold War and the formation of European multilateral forums (such as the Council of Europe, the European Economic Community, and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe)
- The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent democratization of Eastern Europe
- NATO's strategic evolution and the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine
- The structural impacts of Brexit on global trade networks and the Euro-Mediterranean (Euro-MED) dialogue
- The complex modern conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, including their destabilizing effects on the stability, diplomatic relations, and security dynamics of the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) theater

The closing portion of the two-hour lecture featured a vibrant *tour-de-table*, where participants engaged in a robust exchange of perspectives. The academic yet highly personable atmosphere, combined with direct access to such a distinguished guest, left a profound impression on the attendees.

In concluding the event, Sir Geoffrey Hoon, the hosts, and the participants jointly emphasized that the CED program offers an unparalleled educational environment. They affirmed that this specific interactive format provides a remarkable capac-

ity-building opportunity for emerging leaders navigating the state, intergovernmental, and corporate sectors globally.

The program's educational journey continues forward. The next sessions will feature representatives from the world's leading development and trade agencies—including UNIDO, the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and international banking institutions—with experts joining from Washington, D.C., Vienna, and Geneva. This will be followed by an interactive session featuring the President of Liberal International, Hakima El Haïté.

Dayana da Silva

9. Global Developmental Agencies at Work

Abstract

On September 14, the seventh session of the Certified Economic Diplomat Program (CEDP), hosted by the Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in Ghana, brought together leading figures from prominent international development organizations to discuss the significant impact of global development agencies in driving sustainable growth. The panel featured Ute Reisinger, Senior Environmental and Social Development Specialist at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) (IFC, 2022); Ricardo Gomez Puternicki, Senior Counsel at the OPEC Fund for International Development (Gomez Puternicki, 2022); and Florian Peter Iwinjak, External Relations Officer at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 2022).

Each speaker provided valuable insights into the role their respective organizations play in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in Africa and other emerging economies. Reisinger discussed the essential contributions of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to financing sustainable development (World Bank, 2020), while Gomez Puternicki examined the role of the OPEC Fund in financing development through business diplomacy and its focus on South-South cooperation (Gomez Puternicki, 2022). Iwinjak's presentation focused on the critical role of industrial development in achieving the SDGs, particularly in Africa,

where industrialization remains a key factor in improving economic resilience and combating poverty (UNIDO, 2022).

Throughout the session, the speakers underscored the importance of collaboration among development agencies, governments, and the private sector to tackle pressing global challenges, including climate change, economic inequality, and political instability (Pattberg, 2021). The session highlighted how global development agencies can leverage financial instruments, technical expertise, and innovative solutions to foster long-term, sustainable growth, while emphasizing the importance of multilateralism in addressing these challenges (Zhang, 2020). This discussion provided valuable insights into how economic diplomats and future leaders can engage in international development initiatives that drive both social and economic progress in developing countries (Gomez Puternicki, 2022; UNIDO, 2022).

1. Introduction: The Certified Economic Diplomat Program and Global Development Agencies

The Certified Economic Diplomat Program (CEDP), launched by the Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in Ghana, provides a comprehensive platform for emerging leaders to develop the practical knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complex landscape of global development and diplomacy. This program addresses the urgent need for skilled leadership capable of tackling contemporary global challenges, particularly in areas such as security, economic cooperation, and sustainable development.

The session held on September 14 focused on the contributions of major global development agencies in promoting sustainable growth, particularly in emerging economies and developing regions. These agencies play a crucial role in addressing the most pressing issues of the 21st century, including climate change, economic inequality, and political instability, all of which have a disproportionate impact on developing countries (World Bank, 2020). A key feature of the session was the emphasis on multilateralism—the cooperation among multiple countries and organizations to solve shared problems (Pattberg, 2021).

The development agencies discussed, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC, 2022), the OPEC Fund for International Development (Gomez Puternicki, 2022), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 2022), are instrumental in:

- Financing sustainable infrastructure
- Promoting national economic resilience
- Supporting global poverty alleviation

As these agencies contribute to addressing critical global challenges, they also support the integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), which can enhance economic growth and resilience in Africa. AI is transforming key sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and education, offering new opportunities for sustainable development. Their work often extends beyond providing financial resources, encompassing technical expertise, capacity-building programs,

and the creation of innovative financial instruments designed to address the multifaceted challenges that emerging economies face (IFC, 2022; UNIDO, 2022). The role of economic diplomats is thus critical in leveraging these resources and coordinating efforts across sectors to achieve inclusive development.

Through South-South cooperation and partnerships, these agencies can help create sustainable and context-specific solutions that address the unique challenges faced by countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Gomez Puternicki, 2022; Pattberg, 2021). This session served to highlight the vital importance of international collaboration and knowledge exchange in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to promote prosperity while protecting the planet (UNIDO, 2022).

2. Ute Reisinger's Lecture: The Role of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs)

Ute Reisinger's lecture centered around the pivotal role of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in financing sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on Africa (World Bank, 2020). DFIs have evolved from the early days of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which were established to stabilize economies and promote post-war reconstruction (World Bank, 2020). Reisinger traced the historical development of DFIs, emphasizing their shift from providing short-term fiscal support to engaging in long-term development projects that focus on poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and climate change mitigation (IFC, 2022).

Today, DFIs operate on a global scale, with institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the BRICS New Development Bank (Zhang, 2020), and China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) playing an increasingly significant role in providing development financing. One of the primary functions of DFIs is to offer concessional loans to developing countries, often with favorable terms that help them recover from crises—whether economic, political, or environmental. In addition to financing, DFIs can also support African countries in adopting AI-driven solutions to accelerate industrialization and improve public service delivery. Through investments in AI research and development, they can foster innovation and help build the digital infrastructure needed for AI applications across key sectors. However, these loans come with stringent social and environmental safeguards to ensure that the development projects financed do not have detrimental impacts on local communities (IFC, 2022).

Reisinger also emphasized the need for DFIs to adapt to a changing geopolitical environment, where countries like China are becoming increasingly influential in shaping the global development agenda (Pattberg, 2021). The governance structures of these institutions are often criticized for being overly influenced by wealthy member states, but Reisinger argued that the incorporation of inclusive and context-sensitive development policies is essential for ensuring that DFIs contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in a way that is both sustainable and equitable (IFC, 2022).

In conclusion, DFIs not only provide critical financial resources but also act as knowledge banks, offering technical

expertise and capacity-building support to help developing nations design and implement projects that address local needs while fostering long-term economic growth and sustainability (World Bank, 2020).

3. Ricardo José Gómez Puternicki: Financing Development Through Business Diplomacy

Ricardo Gomez Puternicki's presentation focused on the OPEC Fund for International Development and its strategic approach to financing sustainable development projects in low- and middle-income countries (Gomez Puternicki, 2022). Established in 1976, the OPEC Fund emerged as a response to the increasing need for development financing, particularly in countries outside of the OPEC membership itself (Gomez Puternicki, 2022). Gomez Puternicki explained that while the OPEC member states focus on oil production, the OPEC Fund has committed over $27 billion to financing more than 4,000 projects across 125 countries, with a primary focus on South-South cooperation—where wealthier nations in the Global South assist other Southern countries with their development challenges (Gomez Puternicki, 2022).

The OPEC Fund distinguishes itself from other development finance institutions by focusing on projects that align with the United Nations SDGs, particularly those related to food security, climate action, and economic resilience (Gomez Puternicki, 2022; UNIDO, 2022). It does not provide direct technical assistance but partners with other organizations, such as the World Bank (World Bank, 2020) and regional development banks, to co-finance projects.

The OPEC Fund's commitment to South-South cooperation is also complemented by its support for technological innovations, including AI. By promoting partnerships in AI research, particularly in African countries, the OPEC Fund enables local industries to leapfrog traditional development stages and embrace digital transformation (Gomez Puternicki, 2022). This model of cooperation ensures that projects are aligned with international standards while directly addressing local needs and contexts.

The OPEC Fund has been instrumental in financing initiatives that promote economic development and climate resilience, particularly in Africa. Gomez Puternicki highlighted the Fund's successful $1.5 billion bond issuance, which reflected strong investor confidence in its mission to finance climate-smart development (Gomez Puternicki, 2022).

4. Florian Peter Iwinjak: Industrial Development and the SDGs

Florian Peter Iwinjak, from UNIDO, provided an in-depth analysis of the importance of industrial development in advancing the SDGs, especially in Africa (UNIDO, 2022). He pointed out that, despite numerous global crises, including climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, industrialization remains a key driver of economic growth and job creation in developing economies (UNIDO, 2022). Iwinjak emphasized that industrial development contributes to the creation of sustainable value chains and helps nations build economic resilience by diversifying their economies and reducing dependence on external resources (UNIDO, 2022).

He referred to the *UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2022*, which highlighted that countries with strong industrial sectors are better positioned to withstand external shocks, such as pandemics or financial crises (UNIDO, 2022). Iwinjak also discussed the role of innovation and technological advancement in driving industrialization, stressing that Africa must actively engage in digitalization and the transition to clean energy in order to stimulate sustainable growth (UNIDO, 2022).

Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies is becoming increasingly important in Africa's industrialization efforts. AI can:

- Enhance productivity across regional value chains
- Improve administrative and corporate decision-making processes
- Facilitate data-driven solutions in agriculture, healthcare, and manufacturing (IFC, 2022)

By leveraging AI, African countries can address local challenges such as infrastructure gaps, resource management, and access to healthcare, all while driving inclusive economic growth. The link between industrialization and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) is crucial to ensuring that developing nations achieve long-term economic sustainability (UNIDO, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The discussions during this session underscored the critical role that global development agencies play in shaping the future of emerging economies. The insights provided by Reisinger, Gomez Puternicki, and Iwinjak highlighted the need for multilateral cooperation, business diplomacy, and industrial development to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in regions like Africa, where the challenges of poverty, political instability, and environmental degradation are most pronounced (Gomez Puternicki, 2022; UNIDO, 2022). These agencies are instrumental in bridging the gap between developed and developing nations by offering not just financial resources but also technical expertise, capacity-building, and innovative solutions (World Bank, 2020).

One key takeaway from this session is that South-South cooperation—where developing countries assist each other—has become increasingly important, with organizations like the OPEC Fund and UNIDO playing pivotal roles in supporting sustainable development projects across Africa and Asia (Gomez Puternicki, 2022; UNIDO, 2022). This type of collaboration allows for more context-specific solutions, fostering local ownership of development projects while reducing dependency on traditional donor countries (Gomez Puternicki, 2022). Furthermore, the shift toward a clean energy transition and digital innovation as central components of industrial development in Africa emphasizes the critical role of technological solutions in achieving economic resilience and sustainability (UNIDO, 2022).

As these organizations evolve, they must continue to adapt to the challenges of climate change, economic inequality, and global health crises, while remaining flexible enough to respond to the changing geopolitical landscape (Pattberg, 2021; Zhang, 2020). Looking ahead, it is crucial for these organizations to continue embracing the potential of AI and digital technologies to help Africa leapfrog traditional development paths and secure long-term sustainable growth (IFC, 2022). By co-financing projects, strengthening partnerships, and promoting inclusive growth, these institutions have the potential to create lasting change in some of the world's most vulnerable regions (Gomez Puternicki, 2022; UNIDO, 2022). Ultimately, the lessons learned in this session provide invaluable guidance for future economic diplomats and leaders in understanding how to navigate the complexities of global development (World Bank, 2020).

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10. Passion for Sustainable Africa

Abstract

The Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) event, held on September 21, 2024, was graced by the presence of Her Excellency Hakima El Haïté, a leading environmental scientist, former minister, and a prominent advocate for sustainable development in Africa. As the seventh session of the well-regarded Certified Economic Diplomat Program, organized by the Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in collaboration with European partners, the event offered a unique platform for discussing Africa's role in global sustainability and its potential in addressing critical global challenges such as climate change, food security, and energy production (El Haïté, 2019).

El Haïté's insights were deeply rooted in her vast experience as both a scientist and a policymaker. She shared her extensive knowledge of how Africa's untapped resources, including its youthful population and abundant natural assets, offer the continent a distinct opportunity to lead in sustainability efforts (El Haïté, 2020). Her Excellency El Haïté emphasized that Africa possesses more than 30% of the world's mineral resources, vast arable land, and the largest potential for solar energy production (IEA, 2020; World Bank, 2020). Despite this, she pointed out that the continent is often seen by the rest of the world merely as a market for resources rather than a market for investment and innovation (El Haïté, 2019).

Africa's infrastructure and governance, El Haïté argued, remain underdeveloped, limiting the continent's ability to harness its full potential (El Haïté, 2020). However, she remained optimistic, underscoring the transformative power of Africa's youth and the opportunities inherent in regional integration and institutional strengthening (African Union [AU], 2015; El Haïté, 2020). El Haïté highlighted that Africa, with its vast solar energy resources, could become a global energy powerhouse, but only if it fosters strong democratic institutions and regional cooperation (El Haïté, 2021). She also stressed the importance of a united African voice in international negotiations to secure favorable trade agreements and overcome economic challenges, such as the continent's significant debt burden (El Haïté, 2020). In conclusion, El Haïté's speech was an inspiring call to action, reminding the audience that Africa's path to sustainability is not only possible but necessary for the future of the planet (United Nations, 2020).

1. Hakima El Haïté's Background and Expertise in Sustainable Development

Hakima El Haïté is an internationally recognized leader in sustainable development, environmental science, and climate change. With a distinguished career that spans over two decades, El Haïté has earned recognition for her contributions as an environmental scientist, entrepreneur, and politician (El Haïté, 2015). She holds two PhDs in environmental engineering and environmental studies, alongside a diploma in political communication, which provide her with a comprehensive

understanding of both the scientific and political dimensions of climate issues (El Haïté, 2020).

Her work has focused on bridging the gap between environmental protection and sustainable economic growth, particularly in the context of developing nations (El Haïté, 2019). As a former Minister Delegate in Charge of the Environment for the Kingdom of Morocco, El Haïté led significant initiatives to combat climate change, notably participating in global negotiations such as the COP21 in Paris and COP22 in Marrakech (El Haïté, 2015; El Haïté, 2019). Her role as a High-Level Climate Change Champion at COP22 further solidified her reputation as a global advocate for climate action (El Haïté, 2015).

In addition to her governmental work, El Haïté founded Eau-Globe, an environmental engineering firm operating across Africa and the Middle East, which aims to address pressing environmental challenges through innovative technological solutions (El Haïté, 2020). Her expertise has not only shaped Morocco's national climate policy but has also had a ripple effect on the broader MENA region's approach to sustainability and environmental governance (El Haïté, 2019).

2. Africa's Tremendous Potential: Natural Resources and Youth

El Haïté began her lecture by highlighting Africa's immense potential, not only in terms of natural resources but also in its young and dynamic population (El Haïté, 2019; El Haïté, 2020). Africa is home to over 1.3 billion people, with more than 60% of the population under the age of 25. This youthful

demographic, she emphasized, is a critical asset for the continent's future, as it offers a vast pool of energy, creativity, and innovation that could be harnessed to drive Africa's sustainable growth (El Haïté, 2020).

Africa possesses:

- 30% of the world's mineral resources, including vast reserves of gold, diamonds, and critical transition metals
- Extensive oil and natural gas reserves capable of anchoring industrial development
- The largest solar energy potential globally, averaging 2,000–3,000 hours of sunlight annually (IEA, 2020)

In addition to its vast natural resources and youthful population, Africa stands to benefit greatly from the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in various sectors (El Haïté, 2020). AI could play a pivotal role in optimizing the use of Africa's renewable energy potential, improving energy storage and distribution, and driving innovations in agriculture, healthcare, and infrastructure development (IRENA, 2019). Leveraging AI could also help accelerate Africa's industrialization while ensuring environmental sustainability, positioning the continent as an emerging global leader in renewable energy production (IEA, 2020).

However, despite these advantages, Africa continues to face significant challenges. Many African countries remain resource-rich but economically poor, with infrastructure deficits that prevent the full utilization of these natural assets (World Bank, 2020). El Haïté noted that African countries

often export raw materials without adding value through local industries, leaving them vulnerable to external economic shocks. This economic paradox must be addressed to unlock Africa's true potential (El Haïté, 2019).

3. The Path to Empowerment: Institutional Frameworks and Regional Integration

El Haïté stressed that Africa's path to sustainability and empowerment hinges on the establishment of strong institutional frameworks and the promotion of regional integration (El Haïté, 2020). To foster greater regional integration, Africa must also invest in digital infrastructure and AI technologies that can streamline cross-border trade, enhance communication, and improve access to information (El Haïté, 2020). AI can serve as a tool for greater collaboration between African nations, enabling shared platforms for economic cooperation and joint technological advancements (El Haïté, 2021).

She argued that for Africa to fully leverage its resources and address its development challenges, it needs to create stable, democratic institutions that foster transparency, accountability, and good governance (El Haïté, 2020; AU, 2015). These institutions serve as the bedrock upon which Africa's sustainable future can be built, ensuring that the continent's vast potential is channeled toward inclusive growth and development (El Haïté, 2020).

Regional integration is another key element in this process. El Haïté emphasized that no single African country can achieve sustainable development on its own; rather, the continent must work together to harness its collective strength (UNECA, 2019). She pointed out that Africa's nations must over-

come historical divisions and create regional frameworks for economic, political, and infrastructural cooperation. By doing so, Africa can build a single market, facilitate cross-border trade, and implement large-scale development projects that transcend national boundaries (AU, 2015).

She cited the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, which envisions a fully integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, as a critical step in the right direction (AU, 2015). However, El Haïté acknowledged that achieving regional integration would require overcoming significant obstacles, such as political fragmentation, corruption, and insufficient investment in infrastructure. Still, she remained optimistic that through collective action and strong leadership, Africa could move toward greater unity and prosperity (El Haïté, 2020).

4. Challenges and Opportunities: Overcoming Climate Vulnerability and Economic Hurdles

El Haïté acknowledged that Africa faces numerous challenges on its journey toward sustainability, especially in terms of climate vulnerability and economic instability (UNFCCC, 2020). Artificial intelligence (AI) can play a crucial role in helping Africa address its climate vulnerability by providing predictive tools for climate change, enabling better disaster preparedness, and optimizing resource management (El Haïté, 2020). By using AI to monitor environmental conditions and predict future climate patterns, African nations can develop more effective strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate-related disasters (El Haïté, 2021).

Africa is the most vulnerable continent to the impacts of climate change—including droughts, floods, and extreme weather events—which undermine agricultural productivity and exacerbate poverty (UNFCCC, 2020). Yet, El Haïté argued that this vulnerability presents an opportunity for Africa to take a different path in its development (El Haïté, 2020). Rather than following the traditional development model that has led to environmental degradation and resource depletion in other parts of the world, Africa has the chance to leapfrog to more sustainable technologies and practices (WRI, 2018). She emphasized that Africa could build a decarbonized economy, investing in green technologies, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture from the outset (El Haïté, 2021; IRENA, 2019).

She also highlighted that the continent must adopt a collective approach to global negotiations, advocating for better terms in trade agreements, climate financing, and debt relief (El Haïté, 2020). By presenting a united voice, Africa could address its debt burden, reduce its dependency on foreign aid, and negotiate better terms for sustainable development (El Haïté, 2020).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, El Haïté's lecture provided a comprehensive and optimistic view of Africa's path to sustainability. She outlined the continent's immense potential, highlighted the importance of strong governance and regional integration, and discussed the challenges Africa faces in addressing climate vulnerability and economic disparities (El Haïté, 2020; UN-

ECA, 2019).

However, El Haïté remains hopeful that Africa can rise to meet these challenges. With its abundant natural resources, youthful population, and a renewed focus on sustainable development, Africa is well-positioned to play a crucial role in global efforts to combat climate change, promote food security, and lead in energy production (IEA, 2020; El Haïté, 2019).

For this to happen, Africa must:

- Unite its diplomatic voice on the global stage
- Strengthen its state and economic institutions
- Invest in a sustainable, decarbonized future (AU, 2015; El Haïté, 2020)

As El Haïté emphasized, the continent's youth, empowered by the right governance structures, will be the driving force behind this transformation, propelling Africa toward a future of dignity, prosperity, and environmental sustainability (El Haïté, 2020).

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11. ICCD - Future That Begins Now

Abstract

On September 28, at the Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) event, H.E. Mr. Yousef Hasan Khalawi, Secretary General of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD), delivered an insightful address on the ICCD's role in fostering private sector development worldwide (Khalawi, 2023). The event, organized by the Institute of Economics & Finance (IEF) in partnership with European affiliates, explored the strategic influence of chambers of commerce on economic growth, highlighting the ICCD's unique role in promoting sustainable development and fostering trade among member and non-member states alike (Aloufi, 2020). Alongside Mr. Khalawi's presentation, Dr. Umar Oseni and Eng. Ashraf El Tanbouly also contributed valuable insights, particularly focusing on arbitration as a means of enhancing investor confidence and the rising demand for Halal products in Africa (American Chamber of Commerce, 2018).

Central to Mr. Khalawi's remarks was the power of the ICCD in advocating for the private sector across diverse industries—from agriculture to manufacturing—and the importance of regional integration in fostering economic development (Khalawi, 2023). He underscored the vital role chambers of commerce play in creating platforms for businesses to voice concerns, propose solutions, and collaborate with policymakers to foster growth (Aloufi, 2020). Notably, the ICCD's strategic direction is not for profit but to address the economic

priorities of nations, including infrastructure development and enhancing professional practices (Khalawi, 2023).

The discussion also highlighted the pivotal role of the private sector in driving economic prosperity. The empowerment of businesses—especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—is vital for creating jobs and stimulating economic growth (Aloufi, 2020). In a globalized world, cross-border partnerships and international collaborations are essential to achieve sustainable development (American Chamber of Commerce, 2018).

In this context, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Africa's development strategy can significantly enhance economic opportunities (Khoury & Shahan, 2022; O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). AI-driven innovations could empower the private sector by improving efficiencies, creating new market opportunities, and enhancing governance (UNIDO, 2021). The growing use of AI in Africa, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, energy, and education, can help tackle many of the continent's challenges while fostering sustainable economic growth (Khoury & Shahan, 2022). This integration could complement the ICCD's mission by enhancing cross-border trade, improving resource management, and promoting sustainable practices (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021).

1. Introduction to the Chamber's Role

Mr. Khalawi began his address by outlining the distinct role of chambers of commerce. These institutions advocate for the

private sector by representing a wide range of industries, from manufacturing and agriculture to services (Aloufi, 2020). He emphasized that chambers, as umbrella organizations, can address broad economic issues such as trade regulations, market access, and labor policies. Their capacity to represent the interests of businesses across sectors positions them as vital intermediaries between governments and the private sector, facilitating collaboration and fostering policies that support economic growth (Khalawi, 2023).

In the context of Africa, chambers of commerce like the ICCD can leverage technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), to address these wide-ranging economic issues (Khoury & Shahan, 2022). By incorporating AI, chambers can help businesses in Africa streamline operations, enhance productivity, and facilitate smoother international trade (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of data can guide decision-making processes, identify market opportunities, and optimize resource allocation, all of which are crucial for promoting sustainable economic growth in the African context (UNIDO, 2021).

AI applications could also assist with critical development goals such as:

- Improving supply chains and optimizing logistics for regional trade
- Enhancing digital literacy and technological adoption across African businesses

- Enabling predictive analytics and precision farming to enhance crop yields

- Reducing the environmental impact of agricultural practices to support sustainable development (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021)

For instance, AI-powered platforms can enhance the efficiency of cross-border transactions, making it easier for African businesses to access global markets. Additionally, the potential of AI in transforming agriculture could be immense, directly contributing to long-term economic autonomy and food security across the continent.

2. Investment and the Chamber's Non-Profit Nature

Mr. Khalawi also discussed the non-profit nature of the ICCD, clarifying that while investment is not the Chamber's primary purpose, it plays an essential role in promoting key economic priorities (Khalawi, 2023). The ICCD focuses on areas such as infrastructure development, professional practice enhancement, and economic collaboration (Aloufi, 2020). By representing 57 Islamic countries alongside non-Islamic nations like South Africa and Brazil, the ICCD bridges a diverse network of business communities and fosters economic partnerships (Khalawi, 2023).

The incorporation of AI into the ICCD's vision could offer opportunities to develop smart, sustainable infrastructure projects (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). By applying AI to infrastructure development, businesses can enhance the efficiency of energy usage, reduce waste, and improve resource

distribution across regions. Additionally, AI can help identify areas where investment in Africa is most needed, supporting projects that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNIDO, 2021).

For example, AI-driven technologies can assist in the development of sustainable energy projects in Africa by:

- Optimizing regional power grids and transmission networks
- Forecasting dynamic seasonal energy demands
- Improving renewable energy resource management and storage allocation (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021)

By enhancing the management of energy infrastructure, AI can help the ICCD achieve its mission to support the economic growth of its member states in a more efficient and environmentally sustainable manner (Khalawi, 2023).

3. Evolving Structure of ICCD

Mr. Khalawi stressed the importance of empowering the private sector to drive economic growth (Aloufi, 2020). In developing nations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) serve as the backbone of job creation and income generation. For Africa, where many nations face significant infrastructural and socio-economic challenges, empowering the private sector is even more crucial (Khalawi, 2023). Encouraging business growth leads to a virtuous cycle of economic activity, improving living standards and driving development in areas such as education and healthcare (Aloufi, 2020).

The application of AI can be transformative in empowering businesses, especially SMEs, across Africa (Khoury & Shahan, 2022). AI can help businesses improve their operational efficiency by automating routine tasks, thus allowing companies to focus on more strategic objectives like market expansion and product development (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). Furthermore, AI-powered tools can help businesses access credit and financial resources more easily by analyzing their financial history and assessing risk more accurately (UNIDO, 2021). These AI innovations can play a significant role in overcoming the barriers faced by African businesses, particularly in rural and underserved areas (Khoury & Shahan, 2022).

AI-powered tools can also help improve the quality of products, enhancing competitiveness in both local and international markets (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). For example, AI can be used to monitor product quality, optimize supply chain processes, and reduce production costs. This helps African SMEs compete effectively with global companies, fostering a thriving, competitive business environment (Khoury & Shahan, 2022).

4. Empowering the Private Sector for Sustainable Development

The ICCD's ability to collaborate with global organizations, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), was highlighted as essential in creating impactful development projects (UNIDO, 2021). These partnerships are particularly significant in the context of global sustainability goals, where AI can play a role (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). AI can enable data-driven decision-making

that leads to smarter investments, better resource management, and improved development outcomes (Khoury & Shahan, 2022).

In Africa, collaborations involving AI-driven development projects can help optimize the use of resources, improve agricultural outputs, and enhance renewable energy generation (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). For instance, AI could be utilized to predict weather patterns, improving agricultural productivity by enabling farmers to plan for droughts or floods (Khoury & Shahan, 2022). Additionally, AI could support energy projects by enhancing energy storage solutions and improving grid efficiency, all of which contribute to achieving SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) (UNIDO, 2021).

By collaborating with global organizations, the ICCD can offer more comprehensive support to African businesses, ensuring they adopt sustainable practices while benefiting from cutting-edge technologies (Khalawi, 2023). AI partnerships with international entities such as UNIDO can create a robust framework for scalable, impactful development projects that foster long-term economic growth in Africa (UNIDO, 2021).

5. Partnerships for Meaningful Development

As the ICCD continues to evolve, the establishment of specialized affiliates will allow the organization to focus on areas like arbitration, education, and trade information, thus offering more targeted services to its members (Khalawi, 2023). This evolution is essential for adapting to the needs of mod-

ern economies and ensuring the ICCD remains relevant in a rapidly changing world (Aloufi, 2020).

The integration of AI into these specialized sectors could greatly enhance the Chamber's services. For example, AI could be used to develop automated platforms for resolving trade disputes or providing real-time market information to businesses in member countries (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). Moreover, AI can facilitate deeper regional integration by streamlining cross-border trade (Khoury & Shahan, 2022). By providing data on market trends and consumer preferences, AI can help identify areas where businesses can collaborate to improve regional supply chains, fostering economic integration and sustainability (UNIDO, 2021).

AI-driven innovations could also streamline internal Chamber operations, making data management more efficient and ensuring that services are provided more quickly and cost-effectively (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). For instance, AI tools can help ICCD members access essential resources such as market trends, research data, and development project opportunities in real time, which is crucial in today's fast-paced business environment (Khoury & Shahan, 2022).

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Yousef Hasan Khalawi's address underscored the pivotal role of the ICCD in fostering economic growth, particularly within Islamic countries and the global private sector (Khalawi, 2023). The ICCD's unique positioning as a non-profit entity focused on enhancing economic priorities—such as infrastructure development, job creation,

and the strengthening of professional practices—aligns perfectly with the need for sustainable growth and resilience in a rapidly evolving global economy (Aloufi, 2020).

A key takeaway from Mr. Khalawi's remarks was the crucial role of the private sector in driving economic prosperity. The empowerment of businesses, particularly SMEs, is fundamental to addressing unemployment, increasing income levels, and providing goods and services essential to national development (Aloufi, 2020). As emerging markets like those in Africa struggle to overcome structural barriers, the need for tailored, sustainable solutions becomes all the more pressing.

The role of AI technologies in transforming African economies, enhancing governance, and driving industrial innovation cannot be overstated (Khoury & Shahan, 2022; O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). By harnessing AI, African nations can accelerate infrastructure development, optimize agriculture, and leapfrog traditional industrialization models to embrace cutting-edge technologies, thereby creating new growth opportunities and enhancing global competitiveness (UNIDO, 2021).

For Africa, in particular, the intersection of AI and sustainable development holds immense promise. AI-driven innovations can increase agricultural productivity, boost energy efficiency, and facilitate improvements in health and education, all of which contribute directly to building an autonomous, resilient, and inclusive continental economy.

For Africa, in particular, the intersection of AI and sustainable development holds immense promise. AI-driven innovations

can increase agricultural productivity, boost energy efficiency, and facilitate improvements in health and education, all of which contribute directly to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNIDO, 2021). AI-powered tools like predictive analytics can support decision-making processes, help mitigate risks related to climate change, and streamline trade across regions (Khoury & Shahan, 2022). Given Africa's youthful demographic, AI could also empower the continent's next generation of entrepreneurs, enabling them to build businesses that are innovative, scalable, and able to compete globally (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021).

However, this potential is contingent on fostering a unified vision for development, both within Africa and globally. The integration of AI into Africa's development agenda requires a comprehensive approach that involves international partnerships, regional integration, and the establishment of sustainable business ecosystems (UNIDO, 2021). The ICCD, with its ongoing efforts to promote economic collaboration, is well-positioned to play a crucial role in facilitating such partnerships (Khalawi, 2023). Through collaborations with global organizations like UNIDO and other international entities, the ICCD can help create a framework for AI-driven development that addresses the most pressing challenges faced by African economies (UNIDO, 2021).

The potential of cross-border AI initiatives—especially those in sectors like green energy and smart agriculture—is transformative. AI can help create scalable solutions for sustainable growth while addressing pressing issues such as energy poverty and food insecurity (O'Connor & Sheehan, 2021). By

promoting an inclusive digital economy, African countries can leverage AI as a tool for economic sovereignty and environmental resilience (Khoury & Shahan, 2022).

In summary, the combination of the ICCD's strategic vision with AI-driven innovations offers a unique opportunity to unlock Africa's vast potential and transform its economies (Khalawi, 2023). This collaborative approach—where technology meets policy, business, and sustainable practices—could be the key to achieving a prosperous and sustainable future for both Africa and the world (UNIDO, 2021).

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Postface

Economic Development, Economic Diplomacy, and Artificial Intelligence: Africa at the Strategic Crossroads

This volume has traced, through diverse analytical lenses and professional experiences, a profound transformation underway in Africa's engagement with the global economy. What emerges from the contributions assembled here is not a single narrative of development, nor a uniform diplomatic strategy, but a layered understanding of how economic diplomacy, technological change, and artificial intelligence (AI) are becoming structurally intertwined with Africa's political economy.

The chapters collectively demonstrate that Africa's development trajectory in the twenty-first century can no longer be understood through traditional binaries of:

- Aid versus trade
- North versus South
- Technology versus development

Instead, Africa is increasingly positioned at a strategic crossroads where economic diplomacy functions as both a tool of

negotiation and a mechanism of institutional learning, while new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, act simultaneously as accelerators of opportunity and vectors of risk.

Economic development in Africa has historically been shaped by external structures: colonial trade patterns, post-independence political economy constraints, debt cycles, and shifting global power configurations. Yet the analyses presented in this book suggest that a qualitative shift is taking place. Africa is no longer merely adapting to external economic orders; it is increasingly participating in their reconfiguration. This transition is neither linear nor guaranteed. It unfolds within a global system characterized by geopolitical competition, technological asymmetries, and fragmented governance. In this environment, economic diplomacy emerges not as a peripheral skill set but as a core capability for shaping development outcomes, managing technological dependencies, and safeguarding policy space.

The concept of economic diplomacy, as articulated throughout the volume, extends far beyond the negotiation of trade agreements or investment treaties. It encompasses the capacity of states and regional actors to align economic objectives with political priorities, to navigate competing external partnerships, and to translate technological change into sustainable development gains. For African countries, this capacity is especially consequential in the context of artificial intelligence. AI is not simply another technological input; it is a general-purpose technology that redefines production, governance, security, and knowledge creation. Its adoption there-

fore reshapes the very terrain on which economic diplomacy operates.

One of the central insights of this volume is that technological transformation in Africa is occurring under conditions of strategic compression. African states are being asked to integrate advanced digital systems, data infrastructures, and AI-driven applications at a pace that far exceeds historical industrialization timelines. This phenomenon, often described as technological leapfrogging, offers undeniable advantages. It allows African economies to:

- Bypass obsolete stages of industrial development
- Expand financial inclusion through digital platforms
- Enhance agricultural productivity through data-driven systems
- Improve public service delivery in contexts of limited institutional capacity

However, leapfrogging also compresses learning cycles and magnifies dependency risks. Technologies embedded without sufficient domestic absorptive capacity can entrench external control over critical infrastructures, data flows, and technical standards.

Economic diplomacy becomes essential precisely at this juncture. It is through diplomatic negotiation, regulatory alignment, and multilateral engagement that African actors can shape the terms under which AI and digital technologies are

introduced, governed, and scaled. The book illustrates that technology partnerships are no longer neutral development instruments. They carry embedded norms, governance models, and strategic interests. Whether through infrastructure financing, data governance frameworks, or digital trade rules, technology is increasingly a domain of geopolitical contestation. African economic diplomacy must therefore operate simultaneously at the levels of market access, standard-setting, and institutional design.

The contributions addressing Africa's engagement with emerging multipolar structures underscore this point. As global power diffuses and new economic poles assert influence, Africa finds itself courted by multiple partners offering infrastructure, financing, and technological ecosystems. Artificial intelligence intensifies this competition. Control over data, algorithms, and digital infrastructure has become a source of strategic leverage comparable to control over energy or raw materials. In this context, African agency does not lie in choosing one partner over another but in leveraging inter-polar competition to secure developmental outcomes that align with long-term national and regional objectives.

Yet agency is not automatic. It requires institutional competence, strategic clarity, and skilled professionals capable of operating at the intersection of economics, diplomacy, and technology. This is where the pedagogical and institutional initiatives reflected in this volume assume particular significance. The emphasis placed on professional training in economic diplomacy responds directly to the reality that contemporary development challenges cannot be addressed through techni-

cal expertise alone. Negotiating AI-related partnerships demands familiarity with data governance, intellectual property regimes, cybersecurity norms, and ethical frameworks, alongside traditional economic analysis. Without this integrated capacity, African states risk becoming rule-takers in domains that will shape their development trajectories for decades.

Artificial intelligence also forces a rethinking of development itself. Traditional development models emphasized capital accumulation, industrial capacity, and physical infrastructure. While these remain essential, AI introduces new dimensions of value creation rooted in data, human capital, and institutional trust. The deployment of AI in agriculture, health, finance, education, and climate adaptation, as documented in this volume, demonstrates that development outcomes increasingly depend on the quality of data ecosystems, the inclusiveness of digital access, and the legitimacy of governance frameworks. Economic growth driven by AI without corresponding investments in education, digital literacy, and ethical oversight risks deepening inequalities rather than reducing them.

The book's focus on human capital is therefore particularly salient. Africa's demographic profile, often cited as a comparative advantage, becomes a genuine asset only if young populations are equipped with the skills required to participate meaningfully in the digital economy. Artificial intelligence amplifies returns to education and innovation, but it also penalizes exclusion. Economic diplomacy has a role to play here as well, by facilitating international cooperation in education, research, and skills development, and by ensuring that tech-

nology partnerships include provisions for knowledge transfer and local capacity building.

Moreover, AI challenges conventional notions of sovereignty. Sovereignty in the digital age is no longer defined solely by territorial control or legal authority but by the ability to govern data, regulate algorithms, and secure digital infrastructure. Several chapters in this volume highlight the risk of "nominal sovereignty," where states retain formal authority but lack effective control over the technological systems underpinning economic and social life. Economic diplomacy thus becomes a means of defending substantive sovereignty—not through isolation, but through negotiated interdependence. Aligning regulatory frameworks, participating in global norm-setting, and building regional digital markets are all strategies through which African states can enhance their bargaining power and reduce vulnerability.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents a critical institutional platform in this regard. While often discussed in terms of goods and services, its relevance extends to digital trade, data flows, and AI-enabled services. A fragmented digital market would undermine Africa's ability to develop competitive AI ecosystems, while a coordinated approach could create scale, attract investment, and support homegrown innovation. Economic diplomacy at the continental level is therefore as important as national strategies. The book implicitly points toward a future in which Africa's development is increasingly shaped by its ability to act collectively in technological and economic negotiations.

Ethics and governance emerge as another central theme. Artificial intelligence raises profound questions about privacy, accountability, bias, and social trust. These are not abstract concerns, particularly in contexts where institutional safeguards may be uneven and social inequalities pronounced. The volume demonstrates that ethical AI governance is not a luxury reserved for advanced economies; it is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Economic diplomacy plays a crucial role in this domain by enabling regulatory dialogue, the harmonization of standards, and mutual recognition frameworks that protect citizens while facilitating innovation.

At the same time, Africa's engagement with AI governance offers an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to global debates. The continent's diversity, developmental priorities, and lived experiences of technological adaptation provide valuable perspectives often underrepresented in international standard-setting forums. Through strategic economic diplomacy, African actors can influence the evolution of global AI norms in ways that reflect broader human and developmental concerns, rather than narrow commercial interests.

Climate change and environmental sustainability further reinforce the interconnectedness of economic diplomacy, technology, and development. AI-driven climate monitoring, disaster response, and resource management systems are increasingly central to resilience strategies. These technologies depend on cross-border data sharing, satellite infrastructure, and international cooperation. Here again, economic diplomacy is indispensable. It facilitates access to shared resources, coordinates responses to transnational risks, and ensures that

technological solutions serve public goods rather than exacerbate vulnerabilities.

Taken together, the contributions in this book suggest that Africa's engagement with artificial intelligence is neither a purely technical process nor a deterministic outcome of global trends. It is a negotiated pathway shaped by choices, institutions, and capabilities. Economic diplomacy is the arena in which these choices are articulated and contested. It is where development objectives are translated into partnership terms, where technological opportunities are balanced against sovereignty concerns, and where Africa's place in an evolving global order is actively constructed.

This postface therefore does not conclude the discussion initiated by the volume; it reinforces its central proposition. Africa's development in the era of artificial intelligence will depend less on the availability of technology than on the quality of governance surrounding it. Economic diplomacy, informed by technological literacy and grounded in developmental priorities, is the connective tissue that links ambition to outcome. The future sketched across these pages is neither utopian nor predetermined. It is contingent, complex, and open. But it is also one in which Africa is increasingly a co-author of global economic and technological norms, rather than a passive recipient of them.

In that sense, the book stands not only as a record of contemporary debates but also as an invitation—an invitation to rethink development as a strategic process, diplomacy as a multidimensional practice, and technology as a political and

social force. Most importantly, it invites African policymakers, diplomats, scholars, and practitioners to claim ownership of the AI-driven transformations shaping their societies, and to do so with clarity, confidence, and purpose.

Prof. Giuliano Luongo
Director of Research & Publications
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Closing Note

It is with profound humility and a deep sense of responsibility that I took on the role of Alumni President for the Certified Economic Diplomat (CED) program, which was developed and advanced by the Ghana-based Institute for Economy and Finance (IEF) and the International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies (IFIMES).

I express my sincere appreciation for the privilege to serve in this role, which has enabled a continuous and active relationship with the alumni who participated in the CED program. The program not only nurtured economic diplomats by providing fundamental and advanced modalities on how to operate as skilled, professional, sincere, and well-equipped actors, but it also fostered a deep understanding of our shared mission: to build enduring collaboration and cooperation during and long after the program's completion. It taught us to speak with "one voice" on matters of humanity, democracy, and human rights.

The CED Program's Alumni Group remains highly active today. It comprises African nationals, a diverse range of international professionals, young diplomats, and esteemed academics who collectively support the shaping of the world's economy and sustainability while presenting solutions to global crises at various world summits. To this day, alumni actively utilize this platform to exchange crucial information regarding economic developments and global challenges.

The program has made a lasting impact on each alumnus's personal and professional development. A key highlight was the privilege of sharing an educational space with highly respected public leaders, heads of governments, prominent experts, and heads of diverse international organizations—including United Nations Under-Secretaries-General, former OPEC Secretaries-General, and former ministers. Alumni had the unique opportunity to engage directly with these visionary figures, gaining access to strategies that are actively shaping Africa's and the world's future. These discussions spanned critical areas such as:

- The norms and mandates of modern economic development
- Emerging trends in economic diplomacy and digital governance
- Multilateral trading systems and the dynamics of globalization
- The future of African integration and artificial intelligence (AI)

I wish to recognize the dedication of the outgoing executive team, who laid a strong foundation for our community. A special note of thanks goes to our mentors, Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic and all the CED program moderators, whose guidance has profoundly shaped our professional journeys.

The ultimate takeaway for all CED alumni is a renewed focus on "building bridges, not walls." We will work tirelessly to in-

crease engagement, foster innovation, and ensure our alma mater remains a beacon of excellence. I call upon all alumni to join us in this mission. Together, we can build a stronger, more prosperous future.

Yagmur Ceylan Korkut Hassan
CED Alumni President

III. APPENDIX

Program Transcript

Week 1:
Foundations of Economic Diplomacy

- **Introduction to Economic Diplomacy**
  - Definition and core concepts of economic diplomacy
  - Historical evolution and milestones
  - Significance of economic diplomacy in the contemporary global economy
- **Theoretical Frameworks**
  - Key theories and structural concepts in economic diplomacy
  - The intersection of national development goals and state sovereignty

Inaugural Session Special Guests:

- **Prof. Jeffrey D. Sachs**, Columbia University
- **Amb. Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam**, D-8 Secretary General

Week 2:
Economic Diplomacy in Practice

- **Contemporary Practices**
  - Current trends and operational frameworks in economic diplomacy
  - The role of economic diplomacy in shaping global governance
- **Key Institutions and Actors**
  - Governmental agencies and departments managing economic diplomacy
  - The strategic role of embassies, consulates, trade offices, and chambers of commerce
  - The functions of international economic organizations (World Bank, WTO, IMF, etc.)
  - The influence of non-state actors (multinational corporations, NGOs, think tanks, and CSOs)

Special Guest:

- **Amb. Roland Kobia**, EU Ambassador to Ethiopia/AU (*President of the Bureau of EU Ambassadors, 2022–24*)

Week 3:
Tools and Techniques of Economic Diplomacy

- **Diplomatic Tools**
  - Types, economic effects, and case studies of international sanctions
  - Strategies for negotiation and mediation within sanctions regimes

- The role of diplomacy in resolving cross-border economic conflicts

- **Strategies for Attracting FDI**
  - Best practices for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI)
  - Case studies of successful national and regional FDI frameworks
  - The structural role of special economic zones (SEZs) and financial incentives
- **Economic Standards and Norms**
  - The role of international standard-setting organizations
  - The impact of regulatory frameworks on global trade and investment
- **Business Delegations and Trade Exhibitions**
  - Organizing, executing, and managing trade missions and international exhibitions
  - Strategic planning for successful corporate and state trade showcases

Special Guest:

- **Dr. Jovan Kurbalija**, Founder and Executive Director of DiploFoundation, Geneva

Week 4:
Public Diplomacy and Economic Outreach

- **Public Diplomacy**
  - Engaging foreign publics and shaping international public opinion

- Media relations strategies and modern digital communication tools

- **Economic Outreach**
  - The role of embassies in driving domestic and external economic outreach
  - Collaboration with chambers of commerce and global industry associations

Special Guest:

- **Amb. Lamberto Zannier**, Former OSCE Secretary General

Week 5:
Regulatory Environment and Economic Policy

- **Legal Frameworks**
  - International trade laws, treaties, and global regulations
  - Intellectual property rights (IPR) and their macroeconomic impact
- **Economic Policy Formulation**
  - Strategic policy tools for modern economic diplomacy
  - The role of domestic policies in shaping international economic relations

Special Guest:

- **The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Hoon**, Former UK Defence Secretary

Week 6:
Globalization and International Trade

- **Impact of Globalization**
  - Structural effects on national economies and diplomatic modalities
    - Challenges, imbalances, and opportunities in a globalized economy
- **International Trade Dynamics**
  - Trade negotiation strategies and systemic processes
  - Regional economic integration frameworks and blocs

Special Guests:

- **Florian Peter Iwinjak**, External Relations Officer, UNIDO Vienna
- **Ute Reisinger**, Senior Environmental and Social Development Specialist, IFC Washington, D.C.
- **Ricardo José Gómez Puternicki**, Senior Counsel, OPEC Fund Vienna

Week 7:
Trade Agreements and the Multilateral Trading System

- **Overview of Trade Agreements**
  - Bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade agreements
  - Key regulatory provisions and their geopolitical implications
- **The Multilateral Trading System**
  - The structural role of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

- Contemporary challenges and opportunities within the multilateral trading system

Special Guest:

- **Hakima El Haïté**, Liberal International President and Former Minister of Environment for the Kingdom of Morocco

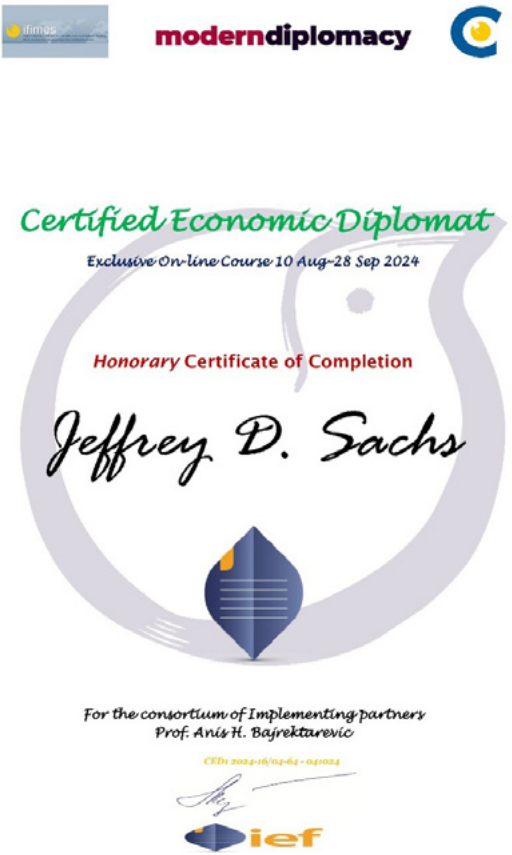
Week 8:
Challenges and Future Trends in Economic Diplomacy

- **Emerging Issues**
  - Technological advancements, digital transformation, and their impact on economic diplomacy
  - Sustainable development goals intersecting with economic statecraft
- **Future Trends**
  - The evolving global economic landscape and shifting multipolar dynamics
  - Strategic forecasting, foresight analysis, and scenario planning for future development

Special Guests:

- **Yousef Hasan Khalawi**, ICCD Secretary General
- **Dr. Umar Oseni**, OIC Arbitration Center Secretary-General
- **Eng. Ashraf El Tanbouly**, ICHS CEO

Certificates of Completion



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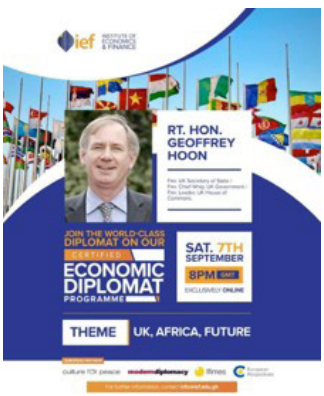
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Session Contents

- Jovan Kurbalija's presentations –
  i) Demystifying AI and ii) Ghana Course

Demystifying AI

Ghana Course

- Florian Iwinjak's presentation – Importance of Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development for Africa

UNIDO - Economic Diplomat presentation

Press Coverage

Session 1 (August 10, 2024)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *Africa between Globalization and Slow-balisation*
- **Modern Ghana:** *Future to Africa with Prof. Sachs* (Article Link)
- **Ghana News Online:** *Unified Economic Space, Fair Credit Score: How Africa Can Develop Rapidly in the Next 40 Years*
- **Eurasia Review:** *The Future of Africa with Prof. Sachs – OpEd* (Article Link)
- **Down to Earth:** *Africa's Path to Rapid Development: Unified Economic Space and Fair Credit Scores*
- **International Affairs Forum:** *The Future of Africa with Prof. Jeffrey Sachs* (Article Link)
- **Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS):** *Future to Africa with Prof. Sachs*
- **Centro Studi Eurasia e Mediterraneo:** *Il futuro dell'Africa secondo il prof. Sachs (The Future of Africa According to Prof. Sachs)*
- **The Seoul Times:** *Beautiful Minds for Africa* (Article Link)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *Two Minds for Africa*
- **International Affairs Forum:** *Beautiful Minds for Africa*
- **Eurasia Review:** *Beautiful Minds for Africa – OpEd*
- **Modern Ghana:** *Beautiful Minds for Africa* (Article Link)

Session 2 (August 17, 2024)

- **Modern Ghana:** *Currents in the EU-Africa Relations* (Article Link)
- **International Affairs Forum:** *Currently in EU–Africa Relations*

Session 3 (August 24, 2024)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *Africa - In the AI Era*
- **Modern Ghana:** *Africa in the AI Era* (Article Link)
- **Diplomat Magazine:** *Digital Sovereignty for Africa?*
- **International Affairs Forum:** *Digital Sovereignty for Africa?* (Document Link)
- **Atalayar:** *Africa's Digital Dilemma*
- **Modern Ghana:** *Africa's Digital Dilemma* (Article Link)
- **Diplomat Magazine:** *Africa's Digital Dilemma* (Article Link)

Session 4 (August 31, 2024)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *No Alternative to Multilateralism* (Article Link)
- **Modern Ghana:** *Experience Meeting Passion in the Cross-Sectoral, Cross-Continental, and Cross-Generational Leaders' Talk: Multilateralism Has No Alternative* (Article Link)
- **International Affairs Forum:** *Multilateralism Has No Alternative*

Session 5 (September 7, 2024)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *UK and Africa for the Future*
- **Diplomat Magazine:** *UK and Africa for the Future*
- **Modern Ghana:** *UK and Africa for the Future* (Article Link)
- **Politico Today News:** *UK and Africa for the Future* (Article Link)
- **Authentic Press Network (APN News):** *UK and Africa for the Future*
- **International Affairs Forum:** *UK and Africa for the Future* (Article Link)

Session 6 (September 14, 2024)

- **Modern Ghana:** *Global Developmental Agencies at Work* (Article Link)

- **International Affairs Forum:** *Modern Developmental Agencies at Work* (Article Link)

Session 7 (September 21, 2024)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *Passion for Sustainable Africa* (Article Link)
- **Modern Ghana:** *Wholeheartedly for Sustainable Africa* (Article Link)
- **International Affairs Forum:** *Passion for Sustainable Africa* (Article Link)
- **The Seoul Times:** *Passion for Sustainable Africa* (Article Link)

Session 8 (September 28, 2024)

- **Modern Diplomacy:** *ICCD—Together for a Better Tomorrow* (Article Link)
- **International Affairs Forum:** *ICCD—Future That Begins Now* (Article Link)
- **The Seoul Times:** *Future That Begins Now* (Article Link)

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Dr. Jovan Kurbalija. Diplomat, academic, and pioneer in digital statecraft. He is best known as the Founding Director of DiploFoundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Plat form, where his work focuses on digital cooperation, cyber diplomacy, and internet governance frameworks.

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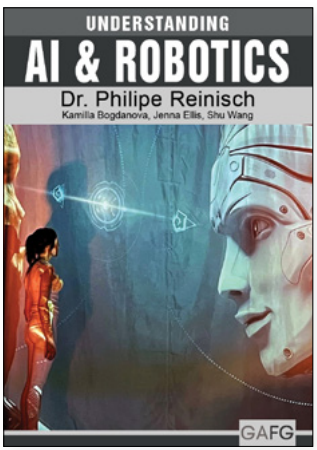
GAFG eBooks

Understanding AI n Robotics



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About the Publisher

Global Academy for Future Governance (GAFG)

The Global Academy for Future Governance (GAFG) advances sustainable development for all stakeholders by enhancing methods, means, and mindsets through an interdisciplinary, multispatial, cross-sectoral, universal, and intercontinental approach.

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The mission of GAFG is straightforward: to enhance the "Three Ms" (Methods, Means, and Mindset) for all societal stakeholders—including governments, businesses, the academic and R&D communities, civil society, and consumers. Aided by technology as a primary developmental tool, the Academy seeks to support sustainable development—maximizing good for the greatest number of species over the maximum time—while systematically eliminating hidden societal, health, or environmental costs.

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The D-8 is an intergovernmental organization, established in Istanbul by the governments of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Türkiye.

This training is a result of collaboration between the D-8 and IFIMES to promote capacity building and professional development. Distinguished participants, undoubtedly, economic diplomacy training aligns with our priority to promote education and human resource development in the D-8. Therefore, through this program, participants will gain insights into the best practices in economic diplomacy to enable them to effectively represent their country's economic interests on a global stage.

I am confident that this initiative will be a great success and will pave the way for more collaborative development endeavours in the future. Thank you!

Amb. Isiaka Imam
Secretary General of D-8

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